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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE PROSE OF THE BEAT GENERATION
AND THE
RUSSIAN NEW WAVE: A COMPARISON.

BY
PER DALGÅRD

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1987.

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submitted by **Per Dalgård**

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The main hypothesis of this dissertation is that the New Wave (Novaia Volna) movement in Russian literature of the late 50s -- early 60s (including Aksyonov, Bitov, Gladilin, Voznesensky, Evtushenko, Akhmadulina, and others) can be seen as belonging to the same, international (sub)cultural trend as the American Beat Generation (including Kerouac, Holmes, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and others).

In Part I (Interviews), this hypothesis is discussed with some of the writers involved.

Part II (The Movements in the Context of Society) shows how the New Wave and the Beat Generation emerged in response to the developing mass society and the spiritual atmosphere of the post-war years. A concept of subculture based on Marcuse's model of the one-dimensional society and Bakhtin's carnival theory is applied to both movements, and the history of the movements as well as the Establishment reaction to them are outlined in the light of this concept. Both movements were involved in a non-political rebellion, a quest for spiritual liberation in religious/metaphysical terms.

Parts III and IV consist of comparative, thematic analysis of representative texts by the two movements (Part III: Prose [Per Dalgaard], Part IV: Poetry [Inger Lauridsen]), grouped into tthree major fields: 1. The nature of the revolt, 2. The quest, 3. The mission of art in spiritual and social terms.

In the prose of Kerouac and the Beats as well as that of Aksyonov, Bitov, and Gladilin, the key words are found to be 'self', 'subjectivity', 'emotions', and 'soul'. Their response to the problems of society was not to join political parties or to depict social conditions realistically in their works, but to turn inwards. The stress was on the individual and his inner, spiritual world rather than on society and the material world.

These writers attempted to widen their own consciousness, to develop a

non-linear mode of perception in order to explore their own inner, subconscious world, believing that this would bring forth prophetic visions about a better and more authentic reality. The themes of revolt and search, as well as the ideals and concepts of art were developed in a very similar way by both movements.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to our friends and supervisors, Edward Mozejko and Robert Solomon.

We would like to express our gratitude to the University of Alberta, and to the Izaak Walton Killam, Andrew Stewart, and Joan Shore Foundations for providing scholarships.

Special thanks to Nina Thorup Dalgård, whose patience was tried, and to Boris Briker, who outdid himself in a spectacular, last minute effort to help.

Table of Contents

0.0. General Introduction 1

PART I. INTERVIEWS 3

1.1. Allen Ginsberg 4

1.2. Andrei Voznesensky 14

1.3. Vassily Aksyonov 22

1.4. Gary Snyder 34

1.5. Andrei Bitov 44

1.6. Bella Akhmadulina 52

1.7. Bulat Okudzhava 60

1.8. Michael McClure 67

1.9. Anatolii Gladilin 75

1.10. Lawrence Ferlinghetti 81

Footnotes: Part One 92

PART II. THE BEAT GENERATION AND THE NEW WAVE IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIETY 95

2.1. The Socio-Political Background 96

2.2. Subculture and the "One-dimensional" Society 104

2.3. The History of the Two Movements 112

2.4. Reception 138

2.5. Thematic Fields 160

Footnotes: Part Two 161

PART III. THE PROSE OF THE BEAT GENERATION AND THE NEW WAVE 171
3.0. Introduction 172
3.1. Carnival and Subculture: The Nature of the Revolt 173
3.2. The Quest 207
3.3. Prose as Self-Revelation and Vision 237
3.4. Conclusion: Part Three 249
Footnotes: Part Three 251
PART IV. THE POETRY OF THE BEAT GENERATION AND THE NEW WAVE 261
4.0. Introduction 262
4.1. Carnival and Subculture: The Nature of the Revolt 265
4.2. The Quest 299
4.3. Poets as Prophets and Performers 345
4,4. Conclusion: Part Four 367
Footnotes: Part Four 368
PART V. AFTERWORD 380
BIBLIOGRAPHY 384

List of Illustrations.

I Voznesensky with Khrushchev behind him 263.

II Ginsberg and friends on tracks outside plutonium bomb trigger factory. 263.

Note on transliteration.

The system of transliteration used in this dissertation is the Library of Congress system for transliteration of modern Russian with the diacritical marks omitted, which is intended for readers who are not familiar with Russian. However, we have chosen to use the commonly accepted transliterations of the names of well-known writers and poets, such as Dostoevsky, Voznesensky, and Vassily Aksyonov. In the footnotes and the bibliography, the system of transliteration will be followed.

> **We felt strangely close to the American writers of our generation... We seemed to stare into each other's eyes in a special way, as though we were searching for some unknown common childhood.**
>
> **Vassily Aksyonov**

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

When we first came across the above statement by Aksyonov in his travelogue 'Round the Clock Non-Stop, we had no idea what he meant. But while studying Russian literature of the 60s we realized that when Aksyonov said "we" he meant the Russian writers and poets associated with the "Novaia vol'na"(New Wave) movement, and when he said "American writers of our generation" he was referring mainly to the Beat Generation. References to the Beat Generation, to Kerouac, Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti kept cropping up in Aksyonov's works, and furthermore it turned out that Evtushenko, Voznesensky, Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti had visited each other, written poems for and about each other, traveled together, read together on stage, given interviews together, recorded together, translated each other, published each other, etc.

There could be no question of the two movements having influenced each other in any deep sense; the authors simply had not read each other's works until they met in the early 60s, when the Russians were allowed to travel to the West. But was there really some "unknown common childhood," some kind of kinship between these two movements?

Re-reading, we found that, taking into account the vastly different environments from which they emerged, the similarities and parallels between them were much more significant than the differences. So significant, in fact, that it seamed reasonable to consider the New Wave and the Beat Generation sibling movements, two manifestations of one international (sub)cultural trend.

We then traveled to Moscow, Paris, New York, Washington and San Francisco and talked to Andrei Voznesensky, Bella Akhmadulina, Andrei Bitov, Bulat Okudzhava, Anatolii Gladilin, Vassily Aksyonov, Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Michael

McClure and Gary Snyder about our hypothesis. The interviews (included as **Part One** of this dissertation), which have been accepted for publication by Ardis Publishers this year, show that to most of these writers our idea was not new at all. The order of the interviews is largely based on the thematical relationship between them; thus, for instance, Aksyonov and Voznesensky are placed after Ginsberg, because Ginsberg discusses these two writers in great details andthey, in turn, are given the opportunity of replying.

The Beat Generation has been thoroughly studied in the American context, and international parallels, for instance the British Angry Young Men, have been pointed out. The New Wave, on the other hand, has never before been studied as one movement, let alone put in an international context. In undertaking to describe and analyse the similarities and differences between the Beat Generation and the New Wave, then, it is not our ambition to say anything essentially new about the Beat Generation. Our primary goal is to do justice to the New Wave by describing it as one movement which can be understood as a Russian manifestation of an international subcultural trend.

Part Two (written jointly) outlines the socio-political environments which produced the two movements and, against this background, discusses the nature and function of the subcultural/ carnivalistic in the light of Marcuse and Bakhtin. This discussion is followed by an introductory description of the two movements as subcultures and a survey of their critical reception as an expression of society's response.

Parts Three and **Four** deal with prose (Per Dalgård) and poetry (Inger Lauridsen) respectively, in analyses of representative texts grouped according to four thematic fields arrived at in **Part Two**. In choosing a thematic categorization principle, we do not intend to leave the formal characteristics of the texts out of sight -- they will be discussed concurrently. But we believe it would be pointless to discuss matters of form in isolation, since both movements are characterized by stylistic eclecticism making over-all comparisons unfeasible, and since seemingly very different means of expression can be equivalent from the point of view of subcultural revolt.

Part Five (written jointly) combines the conclusions drawn from **Parts Two, Three** and **Four**.

PART ONE

INTERVIEWS*

(by Inger Lauridsen and Per Dalgård)

---

* A version of this Part has been accepted for publication as: Inger and Per Thorup Dalgård, The Beat Generation and the New Wave: Interviews with Writers and Poets, Ardis, Ann Arbor, 1987.

1.1. ALLEN GINSBERG

Born in Newark, New Jersey, June 3, 1926. Now living in New York and in Boulder, Colorado. A.G. is often considered the archetypal Beat poet.
Some major publications: Howl and Other Poems (1956), Planet News: 1961-1967 (1968), The Fall of America: Poems of These States 1965-1971 (1972), Plutonian Odes (1982), and many many others, see Collected Poems: 1947-1980, (Harper & Row, 1984).
Translations into Russian: "Dzhessorskaia doroga", Literaturnaia gazeta, 15/12, 1971, p. 9; "Supermarket v Kalifornii," "Obedennyi pereryv kamenshchikov," "Uedinenie," "Posle chteniia Mertvykh Dush," "Moe pechal'noe ia," "Nabrosok," "Amerikanskie dengi," "Pobuzhdenie v N'iu-Iorke," in Sovremennaia amerikanskaia poeziia, edited by A. Sergeev, B. Slutskii a.o., (Progres, Moscow 1975).
About him, see, for instance, Thomas F. Merill, Allen Ginsberg, (Twayne, New York 1969), or John Tytell, Naked Angels, (McGraw-Hill, New York 1976).
The following interview is a transcript of a telephone conversation Edmonton -- Boulder, Colorado, October 23, 1983.

Mr. Ginsberg, is it wrong to say that you and Jack Kerouac were the founders of the Beat Generation?

- It's not exactly correct, because there never really was a Beat Generation, there was a group of friends, you know , and you don't found a friendship. I would say that the founder was Herbert Huncke,[1] speaking literally. He introduced the whole terminology and a lot of the attitudes. And [William S.] Burroughs certainly was our teacher, so you could say that he was the founder. But I don't like the term, it's just a stereotype, and it makes it sound like there is something to found.

Do you, then, consider yourself to be a Beat poet?

- I do and I don't both! The categorization is ridiculous. Although the Beat Generation is a label applied to a group of people, that doesn't mean that my nature or personality or writing or consciousness is located in one spot. Sometimes I don't consider myself a Beat poet and sometimes I do. When somebody attacks the Beat Generation I do.

When you consider yourself a Beat poet what would you say was the greatest achievement of the Beat Generation?

- Oh, writing a lot of great texts. I would say Burroughs' whole work, Gregory [Corso's] very early work and his latest work, Kerouac's whole line of novels, particularly Visions of Cody , and his Mexico City Blues.

What did you all have in common?

- The term Beat Generation has its usefulness, but it also has its disadvantage of putting things in a box which are outside of the box. Just for purposes of friendship and some kind of literary communality, Snyder, Whalen, McClure, even Duncan at times, Creeley, Lawrence [Ferlinghetti], Huncke, and myself, Ray Bremser, Burroughs, Corso, and Kerouac were considered part of something called the Beat movement.[2] The thing that you can say that we had in common is an interest in an open form of some kind, spontaneity in writing, the breaking up of old forms in both prose and poetry. In that sense there was a common insight -- as well as the correlative of opening up of awareness or consciousness. I would say the common insight was spiritual liberation.

What was the aftermath?

- Some opening of old limited, nationalistic, ego-identity; awareness of mortality and the disaster of the universe, and the notion of a fresh planet, as in Snyder. I think the fall-out of that was the black liberation, junkie liberation, psychedelic liberation, women's liberation, gay liberation -- the fall-out of a slight change of awareness of identity. It's like the old Platonic phrase -- I quote it a lot: "When the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake." I don't think that the different liberation movements were a by-product of the Beat movement, but they were a by-product of the spiritual liberation movement. The Beat Generation and the spiritual liberation movement were just sort of riding on the great biological wave of change in human society and awareness, as the population expanded and the globe grew electric.

Do you see it as a global phenomenon?

- Yeah, from what I understand, the long hair phenomenon, as a public matter, a public flag, actually began in the early Fifties in Singapore. I ran into a scholar in Belgrade who had been part of the Fifties and the 68 liberation movement there, which were very parallel to the Beat Movement. The American situation gave a literary expression from the early Forties, but that wasn't published until the mid Fifties on a larger scale. Some little things were published, but it wasn't until the mid Fifties that the works that were best known as representing the American new movement were published. I think that's because we in America were tackling literarily the problem of new form in a way that had been prepaired by Pound and [William Carlos] Williams and others half a century before that. We had sort of a head-start on literary expression. In Russia there was the same revolution of the word back in the Futurists, including the "Back to the Land" movement, Kliuev, Esenin, and with the "Slap in the Face of the Public Taste"[3] and the other manifestoes, and the sound experiments, linguistic experiments. But then that was suppressed in Russia for 40 years and the poets were slaughtered. I still don't know if the younger poets are so preoccupied -- the poets of my age, like Aksyonov, Evtushenko, Voznesensky, [Robert] Rozhdestvenskii -- I don't know if they are so preoccupied as we were with what Williams called "the measure of the line" and the new open form. Voznesensky is obviously concerned with ideas and with verse form, and I know he introduces new ideomatic words, but I don't know Russian well enough to judge; I don't know if he attempted to reconstruct the Russian line of verse in an open form that reflects the rhytm of contemporary ideomatic speech. I think Evtushenko and Voznesensky are both genuine poets, but I find Voznesensky's writing more familiar to me.

You know him quite well, don't you?

- I know both of them quite well, but I know Voznesensky much better. I spent a lot of time with him. Actually we met first in Moscow in 1965, and then we saw each other a month later in Warsaw, then we met again in America, I forgot when; and then, when I was doing some recording with Bob Dylan in 1971, he was in the studio with Corso and others. Dan Aldman, Arne Andersen, Dylan and I went to hear him give a reading and spent some time with him. Then I saw him in 1972, we spent a month together in Australia. We travelled together alone, he got rid of his hosts and I got away from my host, we took a plane up to Darwin Land and went to the Yukkala village and went to a funeral ceremony for several days.

That's where you translated his "Silent Tingling" together?

- On the plane from there to a coastal city, Brisbane, where we gave some readings together. We arranged it all on our own without any help, through hippie friends in Australia, and we took some mushrooms together. I taped the aborigine ceremony, and he was really impressed by it. We were both interested in the oral tradition, and this was the oldest tradition which still exists on the planet.
Then we saw each other again in Italy, Milan, Paris, San Francisco, and New York several times. We got into a little arrangement where occasionally, when I was in the same town and he was reading, I would read in English for him. We did an interview in Paris Review a couple of years ago, and we were together in London in 1965 for the Albert Hall reading, which he came to, though his host didn't want him to read, but I read one of his poems from Anti Worlds.

What do you have in common?

- Mutual girlfriends! No, we are friends. It's a kind of miracle, living in the middle of a Cold War in two opposite countries, separated by a quarter of the Globe at least, the difficulty of getting together. He has the same open mind and awareness and the largest consciousness possible, as we do. In Moscow in his apartment, when we met for the first time, he asked me what language I thought in, and I said: "Oh, Spanish sometimes, English mostly," and he said: "I think in rhythm." So he is aware of a consciousness other than the linear one.

What about Evtushenko?

- I met him before Voznesensky, in New York in the early Sixties, at an anti-Vietnam War reading. In Moscow in 1965 I met him but I think I met him once before that, maybe through Ferlinghetti. I've seen him in San Francisco, New York, and in a hotel room in Mexico City we had a long talk, and I read for him occasionally.

You have been published in the Soviet Union too?

- Yeah, Evtushenko has published two poems of mine in Izvestia -- one was " In September I just saw a Road", and the other one was from Plutonian Odes .

Who translated?

- Voznesensky, but my translator is Andrei Sergeev.

Could you explain more specifically the common features with the Russian "New Wave"?

- The break-out of our respective Post-Stalinist or McCarthyite social conditions; the inheritance of the experimentations in vocalizable form from the Futurists in Europe and the Imagists in America (the Imagist movement seems to have affected even Esenin); then a continuity of the old Bohemian tradition as part of the life of the artist -- a sort of sacred feeling about the life of the artists -- Kliuev or Esenin as lovers, Esenin drinking, Maiakovsky in moods drinking, in love vainly; the oral tradition. The Russians always had an oral tradition, and I think that was one of the inspirations for the American oral tradition -- we got it from them. I'm talking about the old Russian tradition of oral poetry, which had disappeared in America and England -- the vocal bards still survived in Russia through thick and thin. As the statue of Lenin raising his hand --the public oratory. That wasn't a feature of American political life, and from the Fifties on it was drowned by TV. The bardic vocalization was probably the most common thing. With bardic vocalization comes a large consciousness of space around you and some awareness of addressing human beings in that space. That pathetic vocalization of prophecy goes back through Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Gogol in Russia -- Pushkin, you know, in "The Prophet", in Dostoevsky the grief and exaltations of Holy Russia. Holy Russia - Holy America, from Dostoevsky to Kerouac; and Gogol: "Where are you going, Russia, in your troika?" -- from Dead Souls (Chichikov's journey) -- "Where are you going, Old America, in your automobiles?" -- I have a little poem paraphrazing that from 1951.

We, meaning Kerouac, myself, and Burroughs, all read a lot of Russian literature, Dostoevsky particularly. The first sort of meeting of minds that Kerouac and I had was over the fact that we both had read Dostoevsky's Idiot. And we identified with Alyosha or Myshkin. And Burroughs was very interested in that nutty man-confessional...

I read up through Blok, I had Marlynsky's[4] translations of Russian poetry, 19'th century. When I was 13 -14, I was reading a lot of that, I had that book back in highschool, because my father was a poet, so he had some contact with that level of literature.

Your mother was from Russia?

- My mother was from Russia. I'm basically a Russian poet, put in an American scene.

In "Death to Van Gogh's Ear" you compare the deaths of Hart Crane and Maiakovsky...[5]

- I thought their deaths were similar from the point of view that Hart Crane was under enormous pressure of guilt and social disapproval, homosexuality among other things, because gay lib. didn't exist in those days and all the people around him were coming down very hard on him and made him feel like a creep or a freak. Unlike my generation. My friends who were straight didn't give me that problem. Maiakovsky was beginning to get arrested for ideological reasons -- the party hacks -- and his sense of expansion and individuality was being hemmed in. A genius was making innovative spiritual and literary break-throughs, being hemmed in and not supported by the oppressed, by community feelings, much as is characterized by Artaud in his essay "The Man suicided by Society."

Do you see any similar trend in the tragic fates of many of your contemporaries, American and Russian?

- I think we have had much better luck. Among the original Beat group we have a very good record of survival. Kerouac and [Neal] Cassady and Lew Welch died,[6] and that's probably a lower death rate than among insurance people or presidents. The early generation of academic poets had a higher alcohol and suicide rate -- madness and suicide -- because they were more suppressed. Despite the stereotype version of it, transmitted to the public by Time Magazine, the CIA and Encounter, I think the Beat scene was quite a healthy breakthrough. The Russians have done pretty well too; the early generation had a lot of suicides, but the younger...

Who else do you know of the Russians besides Voznesensky and Evtushenko?

- Bella Akhmadulina. She is a great orator, by the way, the only person I've seen read as well as she, as a woman, with the same intensity, is Ann Waldman[7].. That would be a great meeting! I visited Akhmadulina in her house in Peredelkino. When I was in Moscow, Konstantin Simonov's son[8] -- his father had asked him to take me around -- took me to see Akhmadulina, and then Evtushenko took me to see Aksyonov and Rozhdestvenskii.

You met Aksyonov later too?

- I met him in Moscow in 1965 and I've seen him a lot in America. I saw him up in Canada, at the Amnesty International Conference, and in Washington once, and he came to my house once in New York. A couple of years ago, when I thought I was going to Russia, he stopped by. We correspond, and we hatched a plan to get Ardis to publish Naked Lunch, we're working on that now.

You often say, for instance in "Bird Brain," that you hate both the form of capitalism practiced in the US and the Stalinist communism of the USSR -- the bureaucracy of both -- imperialism, militarism etc. Are the two super-powers alike? Can one compare the Establishment's reaction to the Beats and the New Wave ?

- You're talking about the Fifties and the Sixties?

Yes.

- Well, it must be much tougher in Russia than here, incredibly tougher to survive if you open your mouth, really, as forcefully as we can here. The other thing is that if you open your mouth there and get hurt, it means something, whereas here it doesn't mean anything, it'll be drowned by television in two seconds.

You had your trials too?

- Yes, but I was never really uptight or in jail or anything, I mean, I've been followed by the FBI, but... I tell you, the most significant event that I know of is as follows: In 1965 before I went to Czechoslovakia I was ejected from Cuba for writing about Castro's anti-gay speeches and for joking that his brother Raoul was rumoured to be gay. It was a private joke, but it was reported back to the police, and the emigration people came and seized me and held me incommunicado and put me on a plane to Prague. I was there a month, no problem, then went to Moscow and Poland and back to Prague and got elected King of May, and was kicked out, held incommunicado again and then kicked out. But I didn't do anything, I knew it was a touchy moment. Because I went to Cuba I was put on the dangerous security list by Edgar Hoover. So in 1965, simultaneously with being kicked out of Cuba and Prague, I was put on the dangerous security list by the Americans. The result of that was that the emigration people would strip-search me whenever I entered the country. I guess I was also accused of being an international dope-smuggler. The drug-police tried to set me up for a bust. They busted a junkie and tried to throw the book at him by threatening to send him to jail forever unless he went to my house to plant some grass, so they could arrest me. I went to Washington to see Robert Kennedy to complain, to see my congressman to complain. Years later I got my Freedom of Information Act files and saw the inside story of my complaint. The congressman sent the Narcotics Bureau a copy of my complaint. They prepared for him a translation of an article from the Youth newspaper in Prague -- a denunciation of me in typical party-hack, police bureaucracy terms, an alcoholic, which I am not. They prepared that translation for the Narcotics Bureau to show my congressman that I was an untrustworthy person, that I had been kicked out of Prague, was a troublemaker anywhere, and that he shouldn't answer my complaint unless I blackmailed him by publishing it. So in that specific situation I saw communist police and the American police acting in concert, working together, using the same material with the same mentality. Those police love each other, they're aligned in terrorizing the citizens.

However, it must be much worse domestically in Russia. Here you can publish on your own independently.

You can now but what about the Fifties?

- Oh, in the Fifties you could get busted. LeRoi Jones published a mimeograph Floating Bear and was busted for that and had to go through a trial. I met Aleksei Ginzburg in Moscow, and he told me a story of how by Russian law he was allowed a mimeograph machine. So he published Sintaksis on that and they couldn't arrest him for the mimeograph machine,[9] so they interviewed two hundred people that he knew to find somebody who had a "peccadillo" on him. They finally got him and put him to jail for several years for lending his university cafeteria card to a friend. They said they found dollars behind his toilet, just like they would have liked to say they found marijuana behind my toilet.

In any case, nothing lasts forever, no hell is permanent, nor any heaven. I think the only way to deal with the Russians is the way we dealt with the Americans, and which would be to introduce lots of rock'n roll, junk, LSD, grass, psychedelics, meditation, the whole cultural revolution. This is the psychological individuation process working from within, while keeping the outer forms, without any violence – the violence would be too powerful. But the tendency towards an open mind is inevitable, it's just a question of encouraging that. In that sense the Russian strategy is the worst possible, because it makes them more paranoid, putting them up against the wall. Like the Americans would never send me there. I went on my own as a tourist. I talked to William Jay Smith,[10] he says the State Department sends him around because they know he won't say anything embarassing.

Like Soviet delegations of writers?

- Yes, psychic mirror images in certain respects, and the only way to break out of it, I think, is the old Beat way, the old Whitmanesque way, the old Rimbaud way. Rimbaud has got the key to the Russian and to the American problem.

It seems that your poetry is becomming more and more pessimistic, especially in Plutonian Odes where you write about all the disappeared musings of the Buddhist student Allen Ginsberg; and "Bird Brain" sounds like John Lennon declaring that he doesn't believe in anything but himself..

- Oh no! they missed the last line of "Bird Brain." I don't feel that way at all. First of all, those are the musings of the Buddhist poet Allen Ginsberg. In Buddhism the first noble truth is that existence contains suffering. The three characteristics of existence are: 1. it contains suffering -- doesn't it? I mean you're born in a body, you're going to die some time or other, and you are going to suffer absolutely when you die; 2. existence contains transitoriness. Heraclitus can't step in the same river twice; 3. and existence is without ego, without selfhood, which is to say that all human beings are ultimately egoless, there is no permanent essential soul, that is, no God, which is a relief, from my point of view.

Really?

- Oh sure! It's like saying "Are you the Beat Generation?" or "Are you God?" God is just sort of a limited hyper-rationalistic concept. It's a concept about existence which limits existence because it's a concept. The notion of God is a completely schizophrenic notion, it means that there is another world besides the one you are in. The Buddhist view is ~~that~~ this is it. The space we're floating in is the abyss, which is non-claustrophobic. So you are mistaking that view of existence which is more like Heraclitus, that is atheistic or non-theistic, you might have mistaken that for pessimism. The Buddhist view is that once you realize this condition the suffering decreases immensely because you are no longer fighting against any illusions.

So you are not pessimistic, you have not given up?

- I think optimism and pessimism are equally irrelevant, especially optimism. Pessimism is just optimism upside down. They are just sort of sentimentalities, in the sense that what really is interesting is the world and working and relating to what really exists, rather than hoping that what exists is good or complaining that it's bad.

When you look at all the things you've been fighting for it seems as though you have been defending almost every front worth defending?

- I have been having fun. I believe in beauty, like Poe, and so it is just if you are working with beauty, there is nothing but beauty after beauty. If other people don't see it it's their suffering, they'll get reborn monkeys, or, in fact, they're already born monkeys. No, I've been ill the last few years, and that gives a certain growling quality to my voice, and gives a certain lethargy and melancholy to my thoughts, but it's merely a physical ill. We have a permanent school of Buddhism here at the Naropa Institute,[11] which actually tries to do the historic thing of not only uniting America and Russia, but uniting Thibetan psychology and poetics with wild, native Western psychology and poetics, which is a historic project. Unlike poets before us, we now have a working relationship with the classic lamas and their masters. So the stakes have escalated, intellectually and spiritually.

1.2. ANDREI VOZNESENSKY

Born in 1933. Now living in Moscow (Peredelkino).
A.V. is one of the most important contemporary Soviet poets. He is an architect by education.
Some major publications: Antimiry (1964), Akhillesovo serdtse (1966), Ten' zvuka (1970), Proraby dukha (1984), see his collected works: Sobranie sochinenii, v 3 tomakh, (Moscow 1984).
In English: Dogalypse (1977), Voznesensky: Selected Poems (1960), Nostalgia for the Present (1978), and many others.
About him, see, for instance Deming Brown, Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin, Cambridge University Press, London - New York 1978; or W.Gareth Jones, "A Look Around: The Poetry of Andrey Voznesensky", in Major Soviet Writers , edited by Edward J. Brown, (New York 1973).
Interviewed in Peredelkino, May 5, 1984.

Andrei Andreevich, is it reasonable to talk about a New Wave in Soviet-Russian poetry, prose, and the arts in the late Fifties and the begining of the Sixties?

- I don't know if it is or not, but the Wave was there. I'll tell you what happened in poetry. What is a wave? - It is when, say, six good poets gather. That's a wave, and that's what happened. The wave was caused by the reader needing a poet and the poet needing an audience. It's a well-known scenario, because Russia is a country of poetry -- no other country in the World has such a longing for poetry, poetry is the national art of Russia. That's a well-known fact. When we started, this longing was not satisfied. I don't recall any poetry reading from that period, that is to say, Pasternak did some reading in the Forties, but if fifty people came to listen, it was really something. But then the new generation emerged -- generation not always according to age, Okudzhava was older, had participated in the war, Boris Slutskii[12] also; and the group was not exclusively male, Bella Akhmadulina was in there too. In the beginning it was poetry reading nights at the university, at institutes or factories. People gathered completely unofficially, without advance notice. The first night which was advertised in advance was in the Teatr Estrady, on Maiakovsky Square in the former Sovremenik Theatre. The

New Wave was not only a literary phenomenon, it happened in all the arts. So the Sovremenik Theatre was a theatre commune, with shared economy, no boss, but with democracy. On the whole it was based on new principles, new methods, and that was where we had the first officially announced readings. They thought the room was too big, and the administrator came to me and suggested that we gave half the tickets to some soldiers in order to have a full audience. And I told him: "Have you gone out of your mind?", and refused. I remember that evening very well, there were four of us reading -- Rozhdestvenskii, Evtushenko, Soloukhin[13] and myself. They crashed the door, the audience crashed the wall. These were the first historical events. From then on the audience started growing. We used the Chaikovsky Auditorium, and then in the Fall of 1962 we had the first reading at the Luzhniki Stadium. I remember the first night in this enormous auditorium, there was a lot of silence because of troubles with the microphones. But, as a result, the audiences were enormous from that time on. And the numbers of books published began to grow -- at first a thousand, then two, five, ten, a hundred thousand. And this was done in a democratic way. They don't determine the numbers of books to be published for you, they confirm them in accordance with the orders coming from the bookstores, which, in turn, are related to the reading audience.

What did the participants in the New Wave have in common?

- Well, you know, there were a lot of different things involved, art, politics, music. The situation was different from now. In Russia now you will find that rock groups are unbelievably fashionable. At that time there was no rock'n'roll; there was jazz, but not to that extent. Nowadays everybody has a tape recorder and cassettes. We didn't have any singers either, they came later. My poetry, for instance, was pure poetry -- Evtushenko was more of a politician, like a journalist -- Akhmadulina's was pure poetry too. But Okudzhava, as you know, had already started with the guitar, it was a little different, but it was poetry. Then Vysotsky and others came. So there were a lot of different things in the focus of this outburst, but it all started with poetry. Poetry reacts more quickly than prose; a prose writer must think, then write his book, then go through the long process of publishing. Even if a poem has not yet been typed it is still a poem in the poet's pocket and he can read it. I, for instance, never knew what I was going to read at my performances, I used to improvise, and if I had written a new poem before the performance I would read it at once.

Why do you think the New Wave emerged approximately at the same time as the Beat Generation in the USA?

- There is an astrophysicist, Chizhevskii,[14] here who has said that the sun influences, the cosmos influences wars, the psyche, revolutions, and public indignation or decline. I often live in Simferopol, where there are some interesting students of Chizhevskii -- Chizhevskii has, by the way, been in the camps, he was released after the war. He said that humanity develops in periods, and that even the birth of a genius depends on some kind of concentration. He said that this impact comes from the cosmos, or from what we call UFOs. I don't know, but maybe that explains why in a certain period of time this wave emerged -- a little earlier in America, but it continued in the anti-Vietnam war movement, pop-art etc. It was everywhere, in different forms, probably because of some international maturation of the human psyche. But I think that today there is a kind of common psychological decline taking place, both there and here, coming from the danger of nuclear war. People began to analyze, to look around -- even Allen Ginsberg wears a tie -- they all went to universities to study. But then it will start all over again.

Could you mention some similarities with the Beat Generation?

- I think it is first of all a democratization, that is, an appeal to the street, to the lower parts, against conservatism, against hierarchy, both there and here. It's against books and for conversation, for poetry to be recited, when the poet is in front of an audience and not in his office. That is the most important. But as, for instance, Russian Futurism had its counterpart in Italy -- it was the same term, but they had only little in common -- so it is similar in our situation. We knew Allen Ginsberg in the Sixties, and he later became my personal friend, but at that time we only knew Allen Ginsberg, and we liked his style, but we did not know much of what he was standing for. Our conditions were different.

But later he was here in Moscow?

- Yes.

And Ferlinghetti was here?

- Yes. But, I don't know how to put it, Allen wasn't here in any real sense. The first thing he did was to throw himself on Maiakovsky's grave. But, you see, our public was not prepared for him yet, nobody knew him, he didn't give any readings, but he visited some people, Lily Brik,[15] me...He saw a play at the Taganka Theatre and made a small sex scandal there. He was disillusioned. Our country was not prepared for drugs and all those things, so they didn't check him at the customs, and he brought some, but was disappointed that nobody was interested in such things. It was another country; today we too have drugs. To him it was a means of changing the personality; to us all that, including the hippies, beat, jeans, dirty clothes, -- all that was a revolution to us. The country was simple. Later on we had our own hippies too.

There are even some punks around.

- Yes, there are some punks too. And now there is a growing interest in religion.

Where does that come from?

- There used to be a large involvement in mysticism, yoga, and Indian philosophy in this country at the end of the 19'th century. I think that, spiritually, the country closest to us is India. Then came a period of action, active revolution, yes, yes, yes. But for America too India was like a magnet in the East. Our country itself is half Asian, and that has given us a different view of the world. Today this phenomenon is back again, mainly, of course, in intellectual circles.

Don't you think this interest in the East is inspired by the parallel phenomenon in America?

- Maybe... No, because here it first of all comes from [Wilhelm] Reich. Today Reich is the main figure carrying those ideas. He has become incredibly popular recently; poems are written about his life; paintings are based on him. For two years now, there has been an unbelievable involvement in all supernatural phenomena -- Joanna Sisters and Brothers, hundreds of believers in extrasensory perception, etc. And literature follows that line too. In the West with its Christian civilization atheism emerges; here atheism is taught, and this creates a vacuum which attracts that sort of thing. And people are very serious about it. And there is a growing interest in Russian philosophy too, and in the

Orthodox Russian Church, but all that is conservative, archaic and...anti-Beat Generation. Because, you know, to most Russians "Jesus Christ Superstar" is a sacrilege. The Russian character is very conservative, which is why, I think, Surrealism for a long time didn't take root either; it doesn't correspond to the Russian character, many things about the avant-garde seem alien to Russians. Even the journal New World, which was liberal politically, but with regard to "form" it was conservative, and it published articles against the avant-garde -- they were against the Meyerhold performances and against contemporary painting. It's a very complicated and confused problem, which, unfortunately, many people mistake for anarchy, and anarchy is "against civilization", so these people are supposedly against civilization. If Allen Ginsberg came now he would be loved and recognized by the rock'n'roll youth, but not by those -- he would immediately become an "avangardist."

A more narrow question: Can the " Beatnik's Monologue" be read as the monologue of a *stiliaga* ?

- No, it is not a *stiliaga*. It is, of course, a monologue of our youth. But there were very few *stiliagis*, and, furthermore, the *stiliaga* phenomenon was mainly focused on clothes and dances, and in most cases it was like a caricature, because they simply did not have enough information about Western culture.

So it was only a question of form?

- Yes.The *stiliagi* were before the New Wave, before the jeans came, they had long hair and all that, but it was all a caricature. You can read in my memoirs about Pasternak how I went to school with Andrei Tarkovsky who was a *stiliaga*. But he was an exception, in his case it was a protest, a way of developing his personality. And I used to tease him, because we did not have money to buy, but his dad helped him. There weren't any foreigners at that time, so you couldn't find those goods anywhere, but he bought a jacket somewhere without sleeves, and he didn't have the money to have the sleeves sewn on. He was a stiliaga as a hobby. When the jeans came, there weren't any stiliagis left. You have to know Russia to understand. At that time there were no tape recorders...imagine when Coca Cola was a symbol of bliss, people were fighting to get that, the Coca Cola sign was considered dangerous, yes, it was political; so you must understand how much more naive the fight was -- *stiliagis* fighting for a Coca Cola sign! Then came the war of poetry, which was basically a creative war, fighting to change, and, I think, it succeeded in changing the psyche.

In "American Buttons" you write about Allen, Allen, is that Ginsberg?

- Yes.

What do you have in common?

- It's difficult to say ... openness, I think, attempting to change the world psyche, a formal love of oral poetry... He gave me Blake, he is doing Blake with music now, which is very interesting; furthermore he is interested in Ezra Pound. I love Khlebnikov very much. Pound and Khlebnikov[16] - the same background.

And Maiakovsky too?

- Yes, he was of the Whitman tradition, so is Allen. Although I didn't spend my childhood in Moscow, but in Vladimir, urbanism was nevertheless the important thing for me too. And then all the anti-violence, anti-dictatorship attitudes, you know.

Allen Ginsberg has participated in all kinds of liberation movements, peace-movements, practically speaking, in everything. What about you?

- Well, you know, we haven't got that many movements here. Besides I have a credo: With regard to poetry, I don't like the expression "to teach how to live," it's a cliche; I'm no Hitler or Mussolini or some dictator who says: "I know everything, come, people, follow me!"; and I'm no Freud who knows everything about sex, and I'm no Marx who knows all about life. I can only give a method of thinking, that is, poetry gives a principle, a method. Afterwards people themselves are the authors, the collective mind; it's the people who give the answers about sexual life, about political life, about literary life. Poetry simply gives a complicated crystal which teaches people free thinking. People demand answers, but answers are mainly static. Questions are dynamic. But, of course, you give answers because the battle exists, slogans exist, but, in principle, only the collective mind is able to give the answers. In this Allen and I are different, Allen is more of a prophet.... I was very interested in his drug experiments, but I don't think that's the method. Time has passed -- ten years ago we didn't know what was coming out of it -- but now another generation has grown old, and it has become clear that nothing has come out of it.

Speaking of drugs, do you know William Burroughs?

- I don't know him personally. Allen gave me Naked Lunch , and I read it, but that stuff is very complicated. But I'm for art as such, for the biology of art, and in my opinion that is the very answer.

But perhaps there are times when one must speak up?

- Of course [takes a picture out of the drawer shoving himself in front of Khrushchev at the notorious March 1963[17] meeting], I did! But I think [points at an experimental concrete poem of his] such a thing changes counsciousness more than that which has been written with plain letters like "long live...", "Down with.." etc. I think that Khlebnikov and Ezra Pound gave the most to the revolution. Well, I have been lucky, because my poetry is pure poetry.

In a poem dedicated to Bella Akhmadulina you write that there were many of you, but that was in 1963...

- I was paraphrazing Pasternak's "There are only few of us." I said the majority -- they were destroying us after all -- but we were many, not poets, but people.

What about today?

- It's the same. Today the psychology has changed enormously. In 1956 the most revolutionary book was Dudintsev's[18] Not By Bread Alone . It's ridiculous, today it's a naive, ridiculous and badly written book. Today we have a [Gabriel Garcia] Marquez, One Hundred Years Of Solitude, changing the psychology of all Third World countries. I know a lot of people to whom that book was a revolution. Today people who go to school think freer, deeper and wider than ten years ago. I remember when in 1956 the Museum of Western Painting was opened at the Pushkin Museum with an exhibition of the Impressionists. I got a reprimand from the Komsomol because I did a wall poster with an article about Matisse, "Matisse is Jazz." If you tell that to people now, they won't believe you. But it was like that.

You have a poem called "Nostalgia for the Present". Don't you feel any nostalgia for your past, the Sixties?

- No, I think any middle-aged man has nostalgic feelings about his youth, its explosive quality; but now I am able to work better and deeper -- at least that's my own opinion.

1.3. VASSILY AKSYONOV

Born in Kazan', 1932.

Now living in Washington, D.C. After a stormy career in Soviet literature which was brought to an end by his participation in the uncensored almanac Metropole, V.A. emigrated to the USA in 1980. Now a leading figure among Russian writers in the West.

Major publications include: Zvezdnyi bilet (1961), "Na polputi k lune" (1965), Zatovarennaia bochkotara (1968), Poiski zhanra (1978), Ozhog (1980), Ostrov Krym (1981) and Skazhi Izium! (1986) -- the last three of which were published by Ardis.

In English, for instance: A Ticket to the Stars (1963), It's Time, My Friend, It's Time (1969), The Steel Bird and other Stories (1977), The Island of Crimea (1982), The Burn (1984).

About him, see, Per Dalgård, The Function of the Grotesque in Vasilij Aksenov, (Arkona, Denmark 1982); or Vasiliy Pavlovich Aksënov: A Writer in Quest of Himself, edited by E. Mozejko, B. Briker, P. Dalgård,(Slavica 1986).

The interview was made in Washington, D.C., December 1982.

Vassily Pavlovich, you had some troubles with the authorities as a student back in the Fifties, you were even expelled from the medical school in Kazan, how come?

- As is now becoming clear, they were already then, in Fifty-three, before Stalin's death, planning to arrest me -- and they'd already gathered material on me -- simply because my "coming of age" had drawn near. After their twentieth birthday, all children of important "enemies of the people"[19] were arrested and sentenced. I was a student in Kazan, where my father had been the chairman of the city executive party comittee -- that is everyone knew me, I was in the public eye. In my student years, our crowd was of such kind that, if we had known the phrase "Beat Generation" existed, we would have called ourselves the "Beat Generation" -- but we considered ourselves to be the successors of the Russian Futurists. We lived absolutely like beatniks, with all the elements of Beatnik life which they had in San Francisco. We went round in torn clothes, listened to jazz, we lived in a commune, we painted abstract pictures, we had this notebook,, where we wrote all kinds of hooliganish poems, we drank, danced the "boogie-woogie," and the girls used to come to us, creeping into the commune by the window. It was altogether amazing -- we even used to stroll naked around the city and the main street.

How did "they" react to all that?

- They were worried. The apartment landlady painted over the walls, which were covered with drawings. I was expelled from the university after Stalin's death; they expelled me because I had not indicated in the questionaires that my parents were "enemies of the people". That was the official reason!. However, in sixty-six I returned to Kazan and got together with my old friends, some of whom had been beatniks. We got very drunk, and it suddenly transpired that they had all been called for questioning by the KGB. They were all questioned about me and it is evident, I think, that had Stalin not died, I would probably have been in a prison-camp within a month.

But you entered Leningrad University instead?

- It was with the ministry's help. Different times had already come, the change was obvious. Likewise in the department in Leningrad. I simply felt immediately that I was among different people in fifty-five.

What was student life in Leningrad like?

- Very stormy. It was a totally new time. Literally every day, something new was revealed; a window to the West was opened in Leningrad. There was the development of *stiliazhestvo* -- the *stiliagi* were the first Soviet dissidents. It expressed itself only in clothes, manners, and tastes, but it was an aestethic dissidence. At first it went on through dances: each Saturday and Sunday, unofficial dances for young people were organized, attracting huge crowds. They had interesting haircuts! There was only one place in Leningrad where it was possible to have one's hair cut fashionably, and enormous lines of young people used to form at this hairdresser's. But, besides that, there were continued satirical student shows [kapustniki], and, moreover, with a great deal of humor -- humor which was even dangerous. All the time, youthful, musical groups were springing up. Exhibitions began to appear; they brought out Picasso from the Hermitage's storerooms. The first touring artists from outside the Soviet Union appeared. I remember that Everyman Opera from America came with Porgy and Bess -- we stood in line for a week. It was an endless line of young people; campfires burned and everyone had a terrific time -- it was very cheerful. Literary groups sprang up. I began, at that time, to go to a youth club in the Petrograd quarter. It was my first such literary association. There I met those with whom I would be friends and working alongside for long years afterwards: Evgenii Rein,[20] one of the "Metropolitans," for example. The club was directed by the writer David Dar, who died in Israel when he was already an old man. Brodsky used to go there while still just a boy, and Tolia Neiman was there -- a brilliant young poet. We called them the "Akhmatova boys."

Did you write yourself at that time?

- I was begining to write prose, before that I had been writing poetry all the time. But I was never really serious about poetry, I realized that that wasn't it.

It didn't sound like Maiakovsky?

- Not really, and I showed it to almost no one. But I keep them somewhere. In Kazan I submitted some poems to a student contest and won, so they published them in the local newspaper. My first publication was in Kazan in fifty-three. But then in fifty-five, I began to write prose.

When did you write Colleagues?

- I began to write it in the North, in the settlement where I was working as a medical doctor; I finished it as long ago as fifty-nine, and two more stories of mine appeared in Youth in fifty-nine. It was thanks to Vladimir Pomerantsev,[21] the author of the famous article "On Sincerity in Literature," an article typical of the Thaw, which had the impact of a bomb. "Stop lying!" was the idea. And he told me: "Come on now, bring me what you're writing there!" I brought it , and he immediately began shouting, terribly enthusiastically, that is was good. He took a packet of my stories to Youth , and Valentin Kataev -- after all they did tell him that it was from Pomerantsev -- somehow more or less began to read. He too, evidently, wanted to wave it all away, but he also liked it, and thus in fifty-nine I was published for the first time. In 1960 they took me into the Navy for three months, and we were in Tallin as naval doctors.

Did you begin to write A Ticket to the Stars there?

- I didn't begin writing it yet, but it was definitely the reason why A Ticket to the Stars came to take place in Tallin. Tallin made a very deep impression upon me, it was such a remote little place -- sad, desolate, but Europe!

A Ticket to the Stars and many other works of yours and the other prose writers of the New Wave were very preoccupied with youth -- the youth theme. When did this theme end ?

- The last novel I wrote on this theme was It's Time, My Friend, It's Time! from 1964. The theme had dried out, and maybe the hero had gone into life, had left the scene.

Did you turn your back on him?

- Not deliberately. It just wasn't interesting to be with him any more. I could probably have gone on writing about him for a couple of years, and the readers would probably have liked it, because they love such a stereotype. If you write spy-novels, the reader will expect spy-novels from you. But I started looking not at "what," but at "how." That is, I became occupied with form and style.

When did you give up working as a doctor?

- After Colleagues, in the autumn of 1960.

Was it possible to live on that money?

- Well even after that I kept on living. The thing is, it was very difficult to live on a doctor's income; a young doctor's salary is so paltry. It was almost impossible to live. My wife [Kira -- his first wife] was a student at that time, and receiving one hundred and twenty roubles on account of her father, who had been shot. I was receiving eighty roubles, I believe. Then she finished, and overall nothing was left; it was simply very very difficult.

But it probably became better when you were a famous writer?

- I never had a great deal of money. Never. Of course, it's difficult in the literary world:

sometimes there is a great deal of money, and then no money for a long time. But it's more pleasant, nevertheless, if only you know that you can hope, fantasize. That's how it was for me during all my twenty years of work in Soviet literature. Although I was very well known, there was generally no money -- I was always in debt. And not only I, but many people -- Akhmadulina for example, or the late Iurii Kazakov[22] or Gladilin and Voznesensky -- were also always without money. Only a few people... Evtushenko, for example -- he always had an enormous amount of money, wherever he got it from.

Ernst Neizvestny says that you were a socialite...[23]

- Neizvestny said that about me? ... Well, to a certain degree, yes, of course -- but it was a rather bohemian life. A great deal of vodka, and of cheerful, drunken get-togethers. The Sixties were very upbeat, despite all those "crackdowns." A new generation came into literature -- daring, a bit hooliganish, and defiant. It was such a provocative generation -- there was a Renaissance-like, carnival spirit. And there were constant fiestas, under the direct impression of the Hemingway Fiesta -- fiestas, fiestas around the town all night long, from one house to another, and from Erik Neizvestny's studio besides; this was the permanent meeting-place for every kind of bohemian crowd. In the middle of the night they would appear, and, in short, drink; they'd all loll by the canal and swim in it, at four in the morning. Suddenly in the morning you'd wake up and it would turn out that you'd flown over to somewhere during the night. It was generally very jolly. But in sixty-eight, the "hangover" began.

And they wouldn't let you go abroad anymore?

- No, I had been allowed to travel abroad from 1962 till 1967, I traveled for five years -- I went to Japan, Argentina, England, Switzerland, Italy, on the whole I traveled a lot, but then, in 1968, they closed the border to me.

Why?

- Because of those letters of protest against the political trials they closed the border, and I did not travel anywhere until 1973. In 1973 I was allowed to go to socialist countries like Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany. Then in 1975 I succeded in getting a trip to America, but it was like fighting a real war. When I came back from America, they were shocked to see me back. For some reason they had been convinced that I would stay, so for some time after that they again let me travel -- in 1977 I went to France with mama.

Was the New Wave a kind of Soviet Beat Generation?

- Well, they called us the "New Wave". We were closest to the Beatniks when we didn't know about their existence -- but all the same, it wasn't quite like the Beat Generation. I would call all of that literary and artistic activity of the sixties a "False Renaissance"-- but, nevertheless, a renaissance. After Stalin's death, confusion arose amongst communists -- as though they didn't know how they could live without Stalin. Thanks to that confusion, our generation appeared. We were interesting for the very reason that we appeared in a brief, untypical period of Soviet society's development. In principle, Soviet society is not supposed to develop in that direction, it was a break-out from the real development.

All the same, the were a great deal of common elements between the New Wave and the Beat Generation..

- Of course, of course, such rebellious processes also happened in America to a significant degree. There was a great deal which was similar to those English Angry Young Men, to their psychological structure -- a protest against caste society. I remember that, at a festival in 1957, I saw Osborne's play, Look Back in Anger . I understood not one scrap of English at that time, but I felt so much that they were somehow like our people in the way they went about and in their style. Here, when I arrived, I saw an old Elvis Presley film, a film about him -- how he began to sing, and what indignation this music provoked in the fathers of the town, how it was all prohibited!

The works of Kerouac..

- Yes, yes, of course, not to such an extent as in the Soviet Union, but nonetheless there is a lot in common.

His works have also been forbidden...

- Well that's nothing! To say that something is forbidden in America today is ridiculous. If some crazy group of parents in Iowa or Kansas wants to forbid Mark Twain, it means that they are allowed to forbid Mark Twain.

What united the different art forms of the New Wave?

- There was a great unity and everyone was looking for the possibility of uniting with others, of uniting efforts -- everyone was looking for friendship, artists were trying to be together with writers, jazz musicians etc....it was a source of inspiration, in the spirit of jazz sounds -- that is, it was af if everyone recognized everyone else...

Jazz plays an important role in your works too, like Samsik Sabler?[24]

- Samsik Sabler is such a wandering protagonist-- from novel to novel-- the figure of a jazz musician . I never played myself, but I always loved jazz. But I can tell you where it comes from. Do you know which country is the second most important jazz country after America? - It is Poland, the second jazz giant. Then comes Russia. There's a decline now in Russia, but in the sixties jazz was incredibly popular. And in this respect, I think , there is something common, because, after all, it is not a matter of jazz as such -- the core of it is protest, in Poland too, a carnivalistic protest against totalitarianism. Why do ninety percent of the Poles go to church now? - Half of them are believers, the rest simply hate the regime!

Did the New Wave create a synthesis?

- A synthesis not in a literal sense. I recall such a moment after Khrushchev's attacks on young art in 1963. They decided at that time to exert an influence upon the development of young art; they organized a seminar for "creative youth" in the sports camp "Labour". Cinematographers, writers, artists and musicians were there. At the end, when the seminar was closing, they, so to speak, formed us into a square and shoved speeches at us. Gladilin came out from the writers and said: "Dear comrades... we have worked very fruitfully. We have sought, and found, a positive hero of our time, and now we want to present him to the delegates of the cinematographers." And Liosha Zaurikh,[25] a poet, totally drunk, was sleeping in the tent at that time -- the poor fellow was sleeping in his shorts, and we pulled him out and carried him across the whole field to the cinematographers. There was such a terrible guffaw, everyone was falling about, the whole idiotic "square" fell apart, and an improvised play [kapustnik] began -- the whole of which went on in a mocking tone.

Which writers do you feel close to now?

- As before, I like Updike best of all Americans -- although now, living here, I see weaknesses which I did not see before. Of our writers, Bitov is more interesting than anyone, and the late Kazakov was a brilliant writer; I like Trifonov's prose very much. But now, you know, reading isn't particularly useful -- it affects your writing. I was keen on Nabokov at one time -- I read and read him, and suddenly I began to notice that "Nabokovshchina" was flowing from my pen, and I stopped reading him. Perhaps it's better to read English books now...But it seems to me that there is little of interest in American literature nowadays. There are some brilliant figures still remaining from the sixties, there's a general high-level literary "school" -- but besides these there's nothing outstanding. A colossal provincial graphomania exists here in American literature generally. Take the periodicals, all these Atlantics, it's such shit!

Where is Russian literature going?

- To Hell! To Hell, as always! And maybe literature as such will wither away in the new society, maybe the book as paper will disappear, maybe there will be a kind of tubes that you can look into and see everything at once. Maby it will be like video games, a kind of video games. The book is a terribly outdated phenomenon, a real anachronism. with its bound pages that you have to turn over as you read.

Do you intend to write on a computer?

- I -- Never! I don't even use a typewriter, I handwrite all my prose.

Emigre literature?

- There is absolutely no such concept. And Carl Proffer is right, there: emigre literature sprang up before the arrival in the West of new people from Russia - when everything here was already dying. I don't feel myself to be an immigrant in a literary respect, and our literature here is not emigre literature but genuine Russian literature. A border runs between Russian literature and "paraliterature", even inside a separately-taken book: take one of Aitmatov's[26] books and see this border. Here, also, are both hacks, who profit by an anti-Soviet theme, and "real" writers.

What about Solzhenitsyn?

- Solzhenitsyn is a special case. What he is doing you can't call literature, it's higher than literature.

Philosophy?

- History. Historical-philosophical journalism I would call it. He is not concerned with the 'plasticity" of writing. He used to be, and very successful he was --wrote wonderful stories -- but now he does not allow himself to do so.

Eduard Limonov?[27]

- Limonov is a curious document of the time, and this novel [It's me, Eddy] I found interesting and amusing apart from a certain provincial *Herostraticism* -- Herostratos, as you know, burnt the temple of holy Atheis in order to become famous.

We have already talked about Russian and American literature -- but where is Aksyonov going? Will there be a synthesis of American and Russian?

- I don't think so. I have no intentions whatever of penetrating American literature -- only in translations, as usual. In the first novel, which I began and completed in emigration [Paperscape], the entire narrative goes on in Russia; only the final chapter takes place in America. Some people -- those who have read it -- say that some things won't be understood by the Russian reader. But surely it isn't necessary that he should understand everything -- everything doesn't have to be understood without fail. A sense of atmosphere has to arise; some kind of corresponding thoughts...

Style?

- In The Bum, I wanted to obtain everything, to whirl it around in all possible ways: formal, philosophical, historical, political. Now a more peaceful, "piano" work is present [Paperscape]. Earlier, I wanted to conclude a thing with a kind of "surrealistic spiral;" to take off from the earth's surface -- and that, evidently, shall also happen later on, though always with an emphasis on the earth.

How is your personal life reflected in your work?

- What happened to me is, of course, always reflected, but never exactly. Even in "The Village of Sviiazhsk" -- which is about an experience I had -- I all the same detach myself from it as far as possible. "Emigration," for example, is a theme in itself, and I am going to write a novel about it. It will again be an autobiography -- but not really, of course. In today's world, writers very often write about writers -- it's the easiest way of writing novels: John Updike, Philip Roth and Max Frisch write about writers. I at least try to detach myself somehow. I'm now writing a novel about photographers [Say Cheese], if only to avoid writing about writers. It is based on the history of Metropole -- it's solely a reflection of Metropole's internal condition. The "photographers" are metaphorical.

About the role of the grotesque?

- Without the grotesque, I just can't work.

Where does it come from?

- From folklore, of course. One beloved thing, I unfortunately couldn't take it out of the Soviet Union -- I simply lost it, in the end: a film-scenario called "Oh, That Flighty, Restless Youth", made according to the motifs of Russian satirical folklore. When I was writing it, I had become very absorbed in folklore, and I saw where that spiral, that taking-off from the world, came from.

From folklore via the avant-garde?

- Yes, the avant-garde is connected with folklore. What is considered to be a basic, realistic trend -- it's just a thing without roots, a thing out of the practical nineteenth century cheap, superficial positivism. Avant-garde arose as a reaction against that positivism of the sixties of the last century -- it holds out its hand to the genuine roots of human art.

How do you regard poetic prose?

- In what seems to me to be "real" prose, it becomes so closely united with poetry that it's indistinguishable: take such prose as Bely's or Mandelstham's. I have very often wanted to use rhyme and rhythm, especially when pieces are so electrified, and it arises according to strange circumstances. In prose, it is as though you are freer -- but in actual fact you're not -- because, rhyming, you enter an unexpected metaphorical world, and remarkable finds are made there.

The motif of the road...

- It is escapism; it's a metaphorical crossing over into another state, a widening of your horizons.

Birds?

- I love them.

Where do they come from?

- The devil knows...The heron [cf. Aksyonov's play The Heron] is simply a personal impression from the Baltic. I saw such a heron -- it made a very strong impression on me then -- a very strange bird, so amusing...

Finally, miracles: should one believe in miracles?

- Yes -- the only thing on which it is possible to count is a miracle; there are no logical bases for hope.

America -- is it a "miracle" for you?

- America is no longer a miracle for me. I live here as a local inhabitant; as a member of the ethnic minority -- Chinese, Malaysians, black, yellow, white... I do a lot, I'm earning money -- you see, in America the earning of money is socially-useful labour; in Russia the earning of money is our own affair, and not very good with respect to the state or society. Here, the earning of money is a useful, respectable and socially-beneficial business.

(translated by Margaret Bradley)

1.4. GARY SNYDER

Born in San Francisco, 1930. Now living in Kitkidizze, California. Besides being a poet, G.S. is a learned scholar of Zen and Japanese and Chinese languages and literatures.

Some major publications: Riprap (1959), Myths & Texts (1960), Six Sections from Mountains and Rivers without End (1965), The Back Country (1967), Earth House Hold(1969), Cold Mountain Poems (1970), The Old Ways (1977).

About him, see Bert Almon, Gary Snyder, "Western Writers Series", No 37, (Boise State University Press, 1979); or David Kherdian, A Biographical and Descriptive Checklist of Gary Snyder, Oyez, Berkeley 1965.

Interviewed in Kitkidizze, August 1983.

Mr. Snyder, do you consider yourself part of the Beat Generation?

- Well, it depends on what you mean by the Beat Generation. There are two or three phenomena enclosed within that, depending on how wide your scope or definition is. There is what is sometimes called the San Francisco poetry renaissance which is a literary movement -- a literary and political movement -- centered in San Francisco, that started early in the Fifties and became really apparent in the mid Fifties, and it is characterized by its independence from East Coast and European poetic thinking, its independence from what we call neo-Formalism, its freedom from the problems and contradictions experienced by American intellectuals of that period, in the American left, who had gone from Stalinism to complete rejection of all left-wing thought. The characteristic political thought of the West Coast and of San Francisco was never Stalinist really, but was anarchist, and I don't mean that metaphorically. There was a very strong anti-war spirit on the West Coast, a number of writers like Bill Everson and Robert Duncan refused to participate in the Second World War. In addition a sense of the West as a rare landscape, and an interest in the evolving Pacific Basin culture. Kenneth Rexroth and Robinson Jeffers are very important to that background. So I'm definitely part of the San Francisco poetry renaissance, the West Coast poetry renaissance. In the Bay area, that movement, because of the poetry readings that we were giving, generated a much larger sphere of interest and exitement very quickly, and our anarchist revolt was rapidly translated into a large social sphere of revolt which became the San Francisco Beat movement. Now, the name Beat was given it by the San Francisco Chronicle newspaper columnist Herb Caen about 1956, probably, although the original use of the term Beat Generation was in a short story by Jack Kerouac published in 1953 or 54. So then in turn, when Kerouac's On the Road came out and the publicity and controversy surrounding "Howl" came out, similar phenomena rapidly erupted in Denver, Chicago, New York, following the lead of the San Francisco poetry's road. And they started having poetry readings in large numbers and the whole phenomenon was called the Beat Generation. So, if you talk about poetry, it should be described that way; if you talk about the over-all social phenomenon, you can use the term Beat for the latter part of the fifties. As a poet I belong to the San Francisco renaissance, but I'm not a Beat poet and I've never been called a Beat poet.

But you are always mentioned...

- Oh, as part of the social phenomenon. The aesthetic phenomenon identified with Beat is poetry of the sort that Gregory Corso and Allen Ginsberg write which is expansive and very Whitmanesque. My poetry is not of that sort and I didn't contribute anything to that poetry, only to the social and political aspect of the phenomenon.

So, what you are saying is that what unites the Beat Generation is really not aesthetic or literary?

- It's social and political.

Do you see the Beat Generation as part of an international phenomenon?

- In hindsight it seems part of the struggle to transcend the pre-World War II over-simplified dualistic confrontation of monolithic capitalism and monolithic communism, and it's an attempt in various ways to find a third way. So that is where an anarchist point of view, or a buddhist point of view, or a simple communitarian point of view, all those points of views are based within that post-World War II phenomenon of minds trying to break out of saying: I'm either a socialist-communist or a capitalist, which is the way it was right before the war.

But then some poets, like Ferlinghetti, have become increasingly left-wing, some in a rather traditional way.

- True. Some have joined this or that socialist party.

What has become of the Beat Generation?

- I was going to ask you ! - In a sense it was a world-wide nascent stirring of establishing an independence from the simplemindedness of the socialist-capitalist dialogue. Much has happened since then, the women's movement has emerged into politics; and what happened to the Beat Generation was that it transformed into the hippie-generation and continued...

Into the grassroot movements?

- and then it reaches out and connects with the peace movement, the civil rights movement, ultimately with the ecology movement.

You mentioned the women's movement just now -- do you think the Beat writers were a bunch of male chauvinist pigs?

- Oh sure. But there were woman writers too, and they were probably male chauvinists too as all women were at that time, with some few exceptions.

Do you see any connection between the Beat Generation and the British Angry Young Men?

- It seemed to be very close at that time, I read some of that stuff then and it seemed to reflect that same international phenomenon, post World War II phenomenon. That phenomenon did not happen in Japan till much later, and the post-war literary generation in Japan called itself the "Waste Land" Generation and they went on for about ten years in a kind of austere, realistic spirit, and were more interested in, for instance, Existentialism for a long time after the war. In fact, I think that the spirit of the Beat Generation is only now beginning to come into Japan. If there is anything that carries through from the Beat Generation right up till now -- one of the threads that is very consistent -- it is the interest in nature and in the environment that is from the beginning in our poetry and our protests. The peace movement, the civil rights movement, this and that, may not pick up on it, but it is still like the main thread that comes through. Ecological interests are now beginning to rise in Russia and Japan and in China. That's a contribution that some of us made to World poetical and political culture. Now, I got into that discussion with some Chinese writers just last year at a conference in L.A. where they said: "Our task as writers is to serve the people, we feel that we serve the people," and I said: "What do you mean by the people?" and they said: "Well, we mean the people," and I said: "My poetry is to serve people too, but it doesn't include just human people, but animal people and fish people and bird people and tree people, we must serve all these people." They loved it! It really caught them, just like that. So they've been writing about that in China.

But not in Russia.

- No, the Chinese aren't the Russians.

Do you know any of your contemporaries among Russian writers?

- I talked to Voznesensky on the two-way radio once, and I met Evtushenko in San Francisco. He said to me: "You look like a Pirate." He looked like a tennis star. He had all these bouquets of flowers and Champagne and pretty girls.

Have you read them?

- Yes. I can see the influence of Whitman. Whitman was a very large influence in Europe and in Russia, and you can see it come through in those guys -- Maiakovsky too. There is no other American poet but Whitman, really, in the 19' century, that sets out the vision of what America is.

What does your poetics reflect?

- I think it would be a combination of Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound, Chinese poetry, oral literature, American Indian songs, in the original languages and in translations, ballad, traditional Irish, Scotch and English ballads, and the Greek tradition. I was a close student of Ezra Pound's poetics. Pound is very important to this century, you know, Whitman to the 19'th century, and Pound to the 20'th century. But for the West Coast we have a very special ancestor, Robinson Jeffers. He is very special to us. The rest of the U.S. can't stand him.

In connection with the Beat Generation there is often talk about spontaneous creation, spontaneity, as a means of making contact with the unconscious...

- That's not me! Spontaneity is really not a good way to get in touch with the unconscious. Spontaneity takes you down about two centimeters, then you are writing about what is just below the surface. But to work with the deep unconscious you have to be more deliberate.

Meditation?

- Meditation, thoughtfulness, time silence, deliberate writing and deliberate thinking, that is how you work with that.

Is this why you live out here in the middle of nowhere?

- No. I was raised in the country and so I would live in the country no matter what - I don't need any reasons to live in the country.

Whom do you feel you're adressing when you write? Is it necessarily somebody who knows American Indian myths and Buddhism and so on?

- Well, if they don't they'll learn, you see. It's educational.

Have you ever thought of writing commentaries to your works?

- No, I leave that to the scholars. They're doing it too. My book Myths and Texts which was written in 1958 is now finally being understood. The times have caught up with it, and people have worked on it enough. It's like Pound's work -- in the process of reading the work you get yourself an extra education.

You seem to write about what you see. Do you think it's necessary to know your surroundings, this area, to understand your poetry?

- Actually my poetry refers to a territory which is from the Mexican border to Alaska, on the West Coast, and then goes around the Northern Pacific and includes Japan -- that's my territory of natural reference.

Are you translatable?

- There are already translations of my potry in 15 languages.

Do they work though?

- You have to realize that my poetry is very broad and I don't just write about raccoons. Because my poetry actually is quite broad, there are many poems that have a universal frame of reference, there are poems that translate into Serbo-Croatian, Chinese, Polish, Norwegian, Swedish. And the books seem to be doing o.k. in those countries.

Does your poetry come about as sound?

- It's all those things. It may be a preverbal image, pictures, rhythmic beat, a rhythmic pattern, even a melodic line, and out of that preverbal set of perceptions, internal perceptions, out of that would come the actual verbalization of it.

Your use of verse line, which is quite characteristic, is that an expression of this preverbal perception?

- No, these things come about as one writes with a particular rhythm, yes, that's my rhythm, but it's also the way I hear the genius of the English language. It reflects, probably, some of the sense I have of and the pleasure I take in the way Chinese poetry sounds in Chinese. And it's part of an aesthetics of spareness. The genius of the English language is in its monosyllabism, which is going to the Anglo-Saxon rather than the Norman side of English; in the crispness that's possible in English -- that's a real virtue.

So you never feel that the grammatical requirements of the language get in the way?

- I'm the one who decides what the grammatical requirements of the language are, I'm the poet. The poet determines the grammar and syntax, not the teacher. Syntactical and grammatical errors that I have made, so to speak, will be enshrined as proper grammar two hundred years from now. That's the power of the writer, to redefine what correctness is. So the writer hears the genius of the language and detennines from an intuition what sounds right, and that's actually one contribution that literature makes to formal grammar. The lead poem in my new book has a syntactic error in it, a deliberate error.

Have you done any experimenting with synthesizing different art-forms?

- I've done some of that and I continue to. I'm working sometimes with music and sometimes with dance -- my wife is a dancer. I'm very aware of the intimate connections between music and poetry and poetry and dance. I would be inclined to work closely with original models. One of my models for the proper use of poetry, music and drama is in the Japanese No-drama which is really a powerful synthesis. On one side it is very primitive, it has the most archaic forms of poetic and drama events, on the other side it is extremely refined and has passed through a highly deliberate aesthetic process.

Do you read mostly poetry yourself?

- No I don't read very much poetry. I read science, biology, anthropology, history, politics, economics, and Ivan Ilych,and a little bit of poetry.

Is there a large body of Western literature -- the literature of alienation -- that means nothing to you?

- You have to understand that my intellectual perspective is, from lack of a better word, anthropological. My perspective is from the larger framework of human culture, human history in which I look for the norm of human culture. I'm always looking for the norm, for the models, rather than the anomalies. Literature of alienation is an anomaly. It belongs only to the last two centuries and does not reflect the over-all function or use of literature in culture, which is to go with the culture, not against the culture, which is to serve larger purposes of human sanity rather than to demonstrate craziness. So in a larger perspective I'm interested in the poetry of sanity rather than the poetry of alienation. I understand alienation as politically useful, and that poets and writers who have to be alienated are like soldiers you sacrifice on the battlefield. It's a pity that they have to go that way. I have had too many friends commit suicide or die of alcoholism or die of drug-overdoses because they thought that was part of being a writer. And that's not interesting to me. You have too much of that in Europe. There's more deaths by overdose in Germany and perhaps in Holland, than any place in the World right now, not only by poets, by young people, by everybody.

In the U.S. drugs seem to have become integrated into society...

- In such a way that it doesn't kill us. I don't give any romance to that, you know. There's nothing new, nothing romantic and nothing admirable in dying of an overdose.

Another concept often connected with the Beats is a certain anti-intellectualism?

- That's the largest social phenomenon of the Beat Generation and the one I like the least.

Still, you have written poems about how Milton became meaningless to you when you were logging in the mountains.

- That's not anti-intellectualism. Anti-intellectualism is an American problem. It's not just anti-intellectualism per se, but it's understanding how to deal with information and with the cultivation of the intellect, understanding what the right balance is. The Japanese are too respectful of intellectualism and information and of learning, so that there is not enough free creative imaginative play-territory left in Japanese education, and it produces an enormous group of highly trained technicians. But creativity in technology, the sciences, and arts and humanities, is won personally at great psychic sacrifice in Japanese culture. You have to make yourself a little bit crazy. To some extent, you win your role as a creative person by accepting alienation or craziness, and making that part of your life and leading a short life often, as a result, with many broken marriages and many miserable children. So that's a function of over-attachment to intellectualism. The main stream of American culture is what we call red-neck. It's a term for very playful, very relaxed, anti-intellectual, racist, good-natured, physical people who drink a lot, drive pick-up trucks, have a good time, are really good friends, if they are friends, and who have a certain kind of limited perspective and who are in a sense natural anarchists. They are not particularly alienated, and they don't have that many problems. America doesn't have that many problems.

We stopped at Reno on the way here -- it's kind of depressing....

- I love Reno. I mean it. It's a tremendous little world of its own.

Nobody seemed to be having fun there...

- There are lots of people having lots of fun there. It's just that variety of fun that wants to stake everything on a hope. In a sense it is capitalism personified, but not quite, because capitalism is really deliberate and ordered, whereas gambling is simply a transcendentalizing of greed. Anyway, having a place like Reno or Las Vegas is a true function of a pluralistic society. In a true democracy you're allowed to suffer from your vices. Which I think is an interesting position. It would be the case in an anarchist society too. Neither the Russians nor the Chinese are about to allow people to suffer from their vices. So it's very paternalistic. America is not paternalistic, and in some ways I like that. There are things to be learned about that for a possible future society. Like, there should be an allowance for crime, an allowance for vice. Not alienated crime or vice but just that which you do.

What forces or movements in society today can you identify with, where do you think your country is going?

- Where do I think my country is going! Well I think the whole world is going to hell in a hand basket, as we say, but we have to make some really fine distinctions about what that means. I remain politically and socially an anarchist, an anthropological anarchist, which is to say that I can present a very coherent critique of civilization and of the state. The state is unnecessary and civilization is highly overvalued and progress is the religion of the 20'th century. And it is shared by the socialist block and the capitalist block alike.

Sounds like Tolstoy and Thoreau?

- It sounds like it, but it is more sophisticated, intellectually more developed, and it is backed by a larger array of accurate information. The thinker that I most admire in this area is Ivan Ilych. He is a leading post-Marxist, that is to say, he has digested Marxism and has gone beyond it. He has written a dozen books in English which are really acute critiques of the ways the various aspects of the national state have disenfranchised us all. And talking about alienation, people walking around in the city talking about alienation don't know what alienation is.

A final question: What do you think of Kerouac's portrait of you in The Dharma Bums ?

- Well, it's a fiction piece, it's a novel, and so it's a portrait of me which obviously reflects some things that I can recognize. Some of it is his own way of seeing me. So seeing yourself through someone else's eyes is always to see differently. Even when you look at yourself in a mirror it looks different from what you think you are, and when you see yourself in a novel, it is quite a bit different. And some of the things in the book reflect real events and some are invented. It's mixed together.

1.5. ANDREI BITOV

Born 1937 in Leningrad. Now living in Moscow. Although A.B. is one of the finest "psychologists" in modern Russian literature, only a few of his works have been translated.

Some major works: Bol'shoi shar (1963), Dachnaia mestnost' (1967), Aptekarskii Ostrov (1968), Obraz Zhizni (1972) Dni cheloveka (1976), Sem' puteshestvii (1976) Voskresnyi den' (1980), Pushkinskii dom (published in the West by Ardis, 1978).

Ardis published a collection of Bitov's short stories in 1986 called Life in Windy Weather: Short Stories.

About the author, see, for instance, Deming Brown, Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin,(Cambridge University Press, London 1978); or Olga Hassanoff Bakich, "A new type of character in the Soviet literature of the 1960's - the early works of Andrei Bitov", Canadian Slavonic Papers , XXIII, No 2, 1981.

The interview was made in Moscow, May 1984.

Andrei Georgievich, how would you define the New Wave ?

- It was a people's movement, not a literary one, and it starts in 1952-53. That generation came to life before it started writing. The *stiliagi* phenomenon had emerged already in Stalin's time (people mistakenly think that it was after) -- it emerged in Moscow and Leningrad in the shape of those fashionable heroic martyrs. In terms of human lives, they already had some kind of existence even before that. In literature, though, for some reason it manifested itself in the early works of Aksyonov and Gladilin, in the late fifties.

Do you also include poetry -- Evtushenko and Voznesensky?

- It's difficult for me to say, about poetry...yes, of course, it was one "brigade!" If you talk about some kind of renaissance in literature in general, and not about the "wave," something began to happen even earlier. There was "renaissance" in the early stories of Nagibin[28] and in the stories of Iurii Kazakov, who was a great writer in the second half of the fifties (in the sixties he was already slowly turning increasingly silent).

What did you have in common besides friendship and the fact that you belonged to the same generation? Would you say, a tendency to turn away from reality?

- Yes, but we understand that as looking for reality. Reality declared itself unreal, and so somewhere the real life had to be going on.

What do you think of comparing the New Wave to the American Beat Generation?

- To a writer such waves are not very important. They are, indeed, real objects for research, but, perhaps, more of a sociological kind, because what often remains from such waves is individuality. Individuality, if it becomes anything, always emerges from such a wave. And if it doesn't become anything it disappears with the wave. A wave is worth studying, but primarily it's a term. In Zagreb, you know, there is a professor Flaker[29] who analyzed the protagonists of the *Jeans Prose* ; but I'm more concerned with individuality. I agree that the wave is worth studying now, since most of those people have gone, or are dead...the whole wave has gone.

These people had been brought up under Stalin and, as such, were not very critical, that is, they understood things simply. Despite the drawbacks and the horrors, a rather pure structure took form, for people are purer, more naive, and ignorant under a totalitarian regime. From 1956 on a spirit of unprecedented, though relative, freedom was presented to them. Logically, they faced the situation with inner purity, inexperience, and artificially created infantilism. I think it is important for your study to take the psychology of those people into account -- how they were formed before the wave. You have to analyze the soul of such people, because the New Wave, when it started writing about itself, romanticised and embellished a lot. At first the writers were not able to carry out any historical or social analysis against their own backgrounds. They only became capable of doing that later, when the wave had gone -- and only those who turned out to be "real" writers. But in the initial period, they did not understand themselves, they only praised themselves and their own way of life. A true writer has so much material that he can choose to express whatever he likes. These people were talented, but they not only expressed what their backgrounds permitted them to express, that also expressed them. That is, there were an awful lot of unconscious layers. They did not intend to write that way, yet it is clear to other people, to people from the West, to contemporary man.

By the way, there was a lot of untruth in the young wave, because there was to much pathos. But it was a sincere untruth -- those people simply did not understand the life they were placed in. They were young. It was an "artistic untruth," which is why they turned out to be very vulnerable when met by unjustified attacks. When the literary concept of "artistic truth" emerged, it isolated individual writers, and then the wave was no more.

You were in Leningrad at that time. What happened there?

- Well, I can tell you some specific features of the Leningrad part of the wave. The country is enormous and time moves in accordance with laws that are somewhat different from those in the West, where everything is close. A Soviet district ["oblast'"] is as big as, say, Belgium, Denmark and Holland taken together. Ideas move very slowly. Moscow is the most dynamic and sensitive part, so the wave started there -- Aksyonov, Gladilin, the late Kuznetsov,[30] but you know all that better than I do. In Leningrad everything was a little later, and at the same time, "village literature" emerged, which I also include in the same wave. It became possible to talk about life -- and that is in my opinion the essential point of the whole thing. It moved very slowly through the whole country. In works from out in the country there is, on the one hand, not so much splendour and sparkle, nor so much success, but, on the other hand, many works are deeper, more thoroughly done. In Leningrad we were accused of being irresponsible and superficial, and to some extent all that happened from time to time. But we were more serious, we did not go for immediate success and glory, for immediate resonance; we came too late to the publishers, to the wave. And my circle of friends is full of tragic fates, but if you read the little pieces that nevertheless gleamed, you will be surprised. One of the most interesting writers was Rid Grachev.[31] Nobody knows him nowadays. He had a book published in 1967, but wrote his great stories in the late fifties, and he could have become a very important phenomenon on the literary scene of Russia. But his fate turned out differently. He was always in conflict with society -- at that time there were still no revolutionary dissidents. He simply, slowly, lost his mind. His book Where Is Your Brother , tiny as it was, came out too late in 1967, you must read it!

Another interesting writer of my age was Genrikh Shef. In the begining he was writing rather naively, but then he reached some kind of peak in 1963-64, when he wrote excellently, but then he too went crazy. Later the so-called "city writers" from Leningrad left: Vladimir Maramzin is in the West; Boris Vakhtin, one of the Metropole writers, died recently; Igor Korichinov is in the West; Gubin stayed in Leningrad, but he doesn't take part in literary life any more. We had an association [ob"edinenie] at the Sovetskii Pisatel Publishing House in Leningrad. I took part in it too, because reading aloud to one another was the first kind of publication. Of that group, I guess, I was the luckiest. After all, I made my way through Moscow; some of the others also got published, but in a somewhat different way. There were two interesting women among us: Maia Danini, who is dead now, got a book, Quick Money , published; and Inga Petkevich was in the association. But because of the long delay, these writers did not find their readership, and their books made only a weak impact. So the fate of the Leningrad writers was dramatic, although, in many respects, they were more exquisite and literarily interesting. That was where the psychological prose was born, really, and the philosophical prose, which was more intelligent and unconcerned with politics. But it didn't find its reader, or it did with a long delay, and, by and large, it did not have any influence on the "All-Russian" process. If you compare the dates of publication, you will understand that these writers wrote at the same time and the same way, but by the time they were published they sounded dissimilar -- that was their fate.

What happened in the poetry of Leningrad?

- I know the circle that Brodsky came from very well.[32] Evgenii Rein, the oldest poet of the "pleiade," recently had his first book published; Dmitrii Bobyshchev is in the West; Brodsky is in the West; Gleb Gorbovskii and Kushner got published, more or less, but without glory. You know, they wanted the fame dramatically. Gorbovsky, for instance, in the late fifties - beginning of the sixties was clearly in such a state. His fame had to be great, but it didn't turn out that way. It's a kind of paradox. I experienced the same thing a long time ago, and I remember it as related to jealousy. It wasn't envy, because we were convinced that we were better writers than the writers from Moscow, whom we considered to be more superficial. And it wasn't until later, in the seventies, when the dust had settled, that we understood that there were masters among them too, and that we had rejected them because of their success and not because of their lack of quality. Aksyonov, for instance, in the begining of the sixties wrote excellent prose, but not that which brought him glory, and the same goes for Iskander. I think that when the attacks on Youth magazine started after the publication of Aksyonov's A Ticket to the Stars , they were attacks on the movement too. At the same time the writers began to develop as human beings. So for one reason they were criticized, while for a completely different reason they changed as people. They grew up, their personalities matured, and then they left the wave in different directions according to their personalities. By the way, Gladilin is an orphaned writer of this wave who doesn't know what to do outside it!

At the end of the Fifties the window to the West was being opened...

- Yes, translations began to appear.

And music came...

- Music came even before on X-ray photos, and jazz on the radio. Jazz and youth and dancing; all that began. But literature was late. After all, we read works from the twenties and the thirties as contemporary. We had such a passion inside for life, and there was such a big difference between European life and our experience that we took those comrades for contemporaries. They too had formed a wave, and we took that wave for contemporary, because of the manner in which it reached the Russian readers. Our background and education are so fantastic, that you have to study them specially; it is, probably, completely incomprehensible to people from the West. Yet we strove to extract the inner core of the Lost Generation, because that was what we needed. It corresponded to our inner needs. We really became absorbed in Remarque and Hemingway and made them our inner contemporaries.

What about your real contemporaries, the Beats?

- Practically speaking, nobody knew the Beats. Kerouac had one and a half stories published; then Salinger entered the scene and was heard -- but only after A Ticket to the Stars . So we only read that which should have influenced us when it no longer could.

Why did the two similar tendencies then emerge at the same time in two different countries and without any influence on each other?

- We live in worlds which are opposed to each other; but from time to time you suddenly realize that we wear the same hats and live in exactly the same buildings -- some

American cars, for instance, looked very much like those of the Stalin style. But one may not grasp what happened to the world after the war -- there was a lot in common. Our histories are different, of course; in some ways we Russians still live in the 17'th century. I am, to use a modern term, a multi-levelled [mnogoetazhen] person, I contain everything from the Neanderthal man to our days, and it is very difficult to determine when you are being a 10'th century person or a 20'th century person. This awareness comes rarely, because, unfortunately, our generation is very badly educated. Ours was a very sensitive generation. Now, as one approaches the age of fifty and has to solve another brilliant riddle, one feels awkward, that there has been enough of riddles, that it is time now to know something. We didn't know much at that time!

Do you consider yourself an existentialist?

- No, I still don't know what that means. I can tell you how the term is understood here. In the course of life a model or a crystal suddenly takes form, and you feel this crystal and then you write your novel on the basis of that. In that sense I'm maybe an existentialist, but being basically a religious man, I don't think that I have any direct relationship with existentialism. On the one hand, as a modern man, I think in models, but I only use them when I find them in life -- it might turn out to be Oedipus or Camus -- but I only use it if it comes to me from my life experience, from my observations. Here, a successful new thing was recently born -- Socialist Existentialism! All these production novels! Directors! Awards! It's a way of thinking stemming from Socialist Realism: it is all clear and in most cases miserable.

I think that Trifonov was the closest to existentialism. He was a serious writer, he had some of that, and, as a matter of fact, without any spiritual searching (although he was a spiritual man himself) -- he was sober in his judgments of life, even dry.

The journey motif seems to be a vital part of the Beat Generation and the New Wave in general, and of your writings in particular. How do you explain that?

- There is only one work of mine which has been associated with the line of journeys from Youth magazine. The protagonist, having left school or finished something else is thrown into real life. My novel, Such a Long Childhood, fits to this scheme. But I must confess, I didn't know that Youth line at the time, because, in principle, I was too arrogant to read what had been printed. So it came to me from life -- I was not a follower, only later did I read the series. I think my novel is written with another kind of pathos despite its youthful character; but the model corresponds. It was a model of life, which is why it corresponded. I too was suddenly thrown into life -- and that was my first experience. I did not start romanticizing the journey, I worked with it as a genre -- it became a weapon in my hands. The protagonist is to me an instrument which I use to describe, it is the author's "I", and I turn him around as I like. The same goes for all the material I have collected. Under cover of documentalism, this is a very fruitful genre. Every work of mine in that genre is written in a different way, depending on the material behind it. Armenian Lessons, for example, is a kind of journey to a country. As a matter of fact, in it I build a model of a tiny country, a model of a small state, that is, of the national life of a small country.

But at the same time it is a journey into other spheres of existence?

- No, it just happened so that I began to dig into the psychology of the protagonist, and to write psychological things, like explorations of inner life. As a member of my generation, I was a wanderer, I loved to travel -- that is still the core of our generation, without doubt. So I had accumulated a lot of material. I divide the process of writing into the internal and the external. The external world I describe by means of the "I". I did not stop writing of journeys because I stopped travelling, I didn't, but because I had exhausted the themes. I had talked about the nation, about sport, about ecology, about everything. The Seven Journeys all lead to the same thing -- the place of man on Earth. It is, indeed, an ecological theme. But the seven journeys may not completely follow the model. The first one is very youthful, and there was apparently no model yet, only the model of the journey itself. But starting with the second there is always a model present. The Journey to a Childhood Friend is not so much a "Young Prose" piece [jeans prose] as it is a work about the young prose, about the wave. There is already some intellectual perspective on what was happening. That is why I think that I had grown up by 1962. I found my own model of the world; from then on my things no longer belonged to the wave.

What happened to your protagonist?

- You know, I think he sort of died. I have subjected him to trials since the moment when I became a conscious writer. I have tried him all the time as an instrument, as a model. Whether it is autobiographical is questionable even to me, because I don't subject myself to such trials and analyses.

1.6. BELLA AKHMADULINA

Born in 1937. Now living in Moscow. B.A. is probably one of the most popular poets in the Soviet Union. She is often seen as continuing the tradition of Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva.

Some major works: Struna (1962), Uroki muzyki (1969), Stikhi (1975) Sny o Gruzii (1977).

Translations: Fever and Other Poems by Bella Akhmadulina, transl. by Geoffrey Dutton, (William Morrow, New York 1969); Three Russian Poets: Margarita Aliger, Yunna Moritz, Bella Akhmadulkina, compiled and translated by Elaine Feinstein, (Carcanet, Manchester 1979), and some poems in Russian Poetry: A Personal Anthology, (Mosaic Press, 1984.)

About her: Deming Brown, Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin; or Nancy P. Condee, The Metapoetry of Evtushenko, Axmadulina and Voznesensky, (Unpublished dissertation, Yale 1978.)

Interviewed in Peredelkino, May 20, 1984.

Bella Akhatovna , why did the poetry renaissance happen in the late fifties, that is, a little earlier than the rest of the New Wave?

- Well, you know, such a phenomenon in the arts always takes place as a certain period is drawing to a close. They are tied together, and so, at that time, after Stalin's death, such events took place. There was such an upturn in social life that, of course, it was reflected in literature. And, then, if we chose to call this a "renaissance" -- which is a matter of convention -- we must never forget that our classics, our holy poets, Akhmatova, Pasternak, Platonov, they were alive and working at the time, continuing their majestetic artistic existence, although they did not always reach their readers. I always say that there was a kind of renaissance movement, but all the same, those poets were better than the rest of us, no doubt. Pasternak and Akhmatova were better than anybody writing today... nevertheless, a lot of very bright minds appeared during those years. In fact, it was easy to get known then, as far as I remember. I think it is much more difficult for a young poet today. Let me simply tell you how I experienced these years. I for one didn't have to make any effort to appear suddenly from nowhere. Those years brought forth a lot of names, a lot of those poets who are still very famous, though each has had his own fate. Evtushenko, for example, was a little earlier than me. He is a couple of years older, and he started publishing very early; in the late Fifties he was already famous, a member of the Writers Union, with a couple of books and so on. And then, as you know, Voznesensky appeared, a little later than me, and then, of course, Okudzhava, whose reputation is still enormous and absolutely pure. I think people grew to appreciate him more and more -- his voice, his subtle, artistic being, in prose and poetry. To me, as I said, everything happened effortlessly, almost without my noticing it. After school I didn't embark on a literary career immediately, my parents wanted me to have a more secure profession. But fortunately I simply wasn't admitted to university, failed the entrance exams, and I wasn't really trying too hard either. All along, I was writing poetry, very bad poetry, by the way. I am horrified every time somebody digs out some of my early poetry. I quickly gained a kind of fame, and now it seems to me that those critics who immediately attacked me made a big mistake, for they helped create my present literary reputation.

Afterwards things became more difficult. It just isn't in my character to pretend. That, of course, met with some opposition. Well, my independent poetic thinking irritated the official critics: "unrestrained growth of unhealthy artistic motifs", they called it in the Gorky Literary Institute, terribly naive of them, really. And then, well, I was thrown out of the Institute....it was in fifty-nine, the year of the tragic events surrounding the campaign against Pasternak, and, of course, that was reflected in my first literary troubles. I was thrown out of the Institute and I rather took it to heart. After all I was very young and I had a sense of injustice and insecurity. Nevertheless, I continued writing and was already doing some translations. So I just hung around and was miserable for a while until the Literary Gazette sent for me. They wanted to help me, they were afraid I would perish. But I'm always more or less in tune with life. Even if one can't avoid suffering, I always sort of see my light, the white light, if nothing else. I was readmitted to the Institute, by order of the Writers Union, and took my exams together with my classmates.

Could what you were part of in the sixties be called a movement?

- Of course, the movement you are talking about did exist. What do I think of it? The popularity of poetry was unbelievable, the public was greedy for poets. It was the time of those famous gatherings in the Institute of Technology and the Luzhniki Stadium, and it was awe-inspiring when such masses of people came together in the enormous stadium with the sole purpose of listening to the poets. On the whole, though, I have no illusions about that time, none at all. The public was hungrily awaiting some new word from the poets. Everybody wanted to let his soul loose a little and simply draw breath, and the poets, of course, were the first to respond to this mood. That's why the poets got famous first. Evtushenko for one became enormously famous. The critics were extremely helpful in this. Well and Voznesensky..., they were different from each other and worked differently, but each of them gave people a lot. And that's why I say that although our literary group has parted...

When did it part?

- Well lately. It has been coming for a long time, but especially lately it has become obvious. Nevertheless, I always say that...first of all, my feelings towards them as human beings are unchanged, I wish them well -- it's not in my nature not to sympathize with them as poets, I worry about their talent, and, even if they came to let down some of their readers, I always say, let's remember what they were able to do in those days. I recall that time without any nostalgia. I don't want to gloat over those days, we have changed too much...It was a time of hopes, but also of illusions, and even the enormous stage success of poetry could only comfort the human soul for a short moment. After all, a person must come to understand that his place is not on the arena of the Luzhniki, but in the suffering seclusion of the poet. Undoubtedly, there was something cheap about the whole thing. If you listen only to the inside, that cannot be shared with an enormous auditorium: that is what I remember, the popularity, the autographs. I still perform on stage, you know, although I'm not keen about it. I know that it is part of my job, of what I'm paid for, but it is too much of a strain, really. I still feel that people are in great need of poetry, and I think that those readers who stick with me (I've been lucky, I have a readership which is very distinctly mine) are the ones who understand that vanity is alright but poetry is another matter.

Then, of course, time brought many disappointments. Nevertheless the path of poetic thinking always remains one and the same, no matter how times change. No matter what renaissance took place in the sixties, we still didn't create anything better than Pushkin: what he said remains for ever.

Compared with those days, things are quieter now, but it seems to me that our readers have grown more subtle, more selective. And I hope that I too have not degraded myself. I have suffered, I have educated myself relentlessly, to keep my conscience awake, to look after my soul. Maybe writers of real genius, the fortunate few, maybe they hear the voice from above so clearly that they never have to decide what they ought to do or not to, to write or not write. But I don't belong to this noble assembly and always feel that each person has an enormous responsibility to himself, if he doesn't want to deceive or to be deceived. Therefore, when I see writers doing all sorts of tricks, I always find them terribly naive. In the end you can't fool anybody, neither the times nor the people. In the end the judgment will be harsh and clear.

The poet can't be political, it seems to me, not in a direct sense. Only instinctively, because the poet doesn't exist in a vacuum, events do concern you, and you are part of them anyway. There comes a certain moment when you have to say either "yes" or "no". And that can be very hard. Then sometimes your soul performs an act of liberation on its own. It says: "I can't go on like this or I fear God's grace will be taken from me." Even if talent can be regarded as God's grace, it is a combination of that and of the grace of outer circumstances. Often those poets who are obviously most favoured by God, are least favoured by the circumstances. In my scenario, twenty years, almost a quarter of a century has passed since those days, and the longer I live, the more I understand that I was being led somewhere, that I was leaving the group. I'm simply glad that now it is clear that we who were together and started it all exist separately, each doing things each in his own way. May each of us be successful in his own way.

What united you all, poets and writers?

- We were very close aesthetically, and we were united in certain hopes and aspirations, and then we simply seemed very compatible as people. We were of the same generation, inspired by the same passion for art and the hope that art would prevail over non-art.

Was it a "beat generation?"

- Well, it is the same generation, but I think that a full analogy between us and the Americans is out of the question. There may be some common features, but life here is much too different. I know Ginsberg, but I wouldn't take it into my head to compare myself to him!

But it was around that time that the window to the west was opened in the Soviet Union...

- Yes, that was extremely important. There was some kind of influence, that's inevitable. Though I don't know whether we managed to influence anybody...

Ginsberg says that the Americans were inspired by the way the oral tradition in poetry had survived in your country?

- Maybe, he would know better than I would.

And there is one more important thing which seems similar -- the Bohemian tradition?

- I'm no specialist on the American way of life, but here there was no shortage of Bohemians, for sure. That's characteristic of us generally, that is, not in a bad sense. When I say Bohemia, I mean altruism, an artistic intensity of life, big parties and gatherings, all these ardent friendships of ours. All that was sort of touching, of course, but I don't get sentimental thinking about it now, especially since a lot of people are no longer here for various reasons. Some are simply dead, others live in a different geography.

In this connection, there is one more thing -- the Russian respect and love for poets...

- Now, that's unbelievable. I don't think you'll find that anywhere else in the world. For instance Okudzhava, when I'm on stage with him I feel the enormous tenderness that is focused on him. I could take myself as a minor example. I wouldn't be able to judge about the spiritual health of the country if it were not for all the letters I get, very intelligent letters at that. No matter where I have been to read, I have always seen this light in people's faces, this unmistakable poetic response, and that is despite the extremely difficult lives they live. By the way, we must mention Vysotsky. That was of course the most outstanding example of this love, a love bordering on madness, beyond all understanding. He was one of the most remarkable phenomena of our life lately, we were struck by his tragic death, and people still can't get over it. I was at the graveyard for some other sad reason, just after Easter and was amazed to see what was going on at his grave, what had been done with flowers. You couldn't get through. Vysotsky was the object of the love of the people, all sorts of people, both subtle judges of poetry who saw in him the rarest gift, the terribly original coincidence of voice and poetic line, and also the public at large.

It's a Russian tradition?

- Yes, but it is especially noticable now when, with life being so hard, people's souls are still able to shake off the burden of all their difficulties. You see it all the time. Sometimes I'm amazed myself. Yes, that we have!

How often do you read on stage nowadays?

- I usually take a whole period out for that. I've just been to Leningrad where I read for a full auditorium, without any playbills, just like that. Afterwards I was in Riga with Bulat, we read in a stadium, actually. Bulat was not going to do it, he hates stadiums, and although the audience loves him, he never flirts with them, never seeks applause. I had read there on my own before so I already knew the Riga audience. I love our Baltic Republics anyway -- why I say "our" is another matter... But finally Bulat agreed, for my sake. Bulat and I are inseparable, our tenderness towards each other and our feeling of literary kinship has deepened through all the years, we always understood each other without words.

So he still performs?

- Well, he is a real stage personality. He reads, sings, small-talks, gives witty replies to notes from the audience, etc. But he doesn't like such big audiences.

You all, both poets and writers, seem to be very attracted to the exotic, like Bitov to Armenia, you to Georgia...

- Yes. Bitov is a very close friend of mine, with whom I am in total sympathy as a writer and as a person. I don't know how writers in the West relate to each other, but here we need each other very much, we need the spirit of what Bulat called "Let's take each other by the hand, friends". And if I may mention readers' letters again, I'm very fond of them. People always write: "We pray for you." I do believe, of course, that praying for others or simply thinking about others does help. I believe that. Sometimes it seems to me that those prayers are what helps us survive. You feel that flow of tenderness all the time -- in spite of the fact it's nearly impossible to get books here, even in the libraries. That's a terrible problem here, the shortage of books. My books, for instance, come in very small numbers. They are easier to get abroad than here.

But what about exoticism? You're fond of Georgia? You even have a collection called Dreams of Georgia ?

- Well, Georgia, yes, that's really something. It is perhaps not so much a matter of exoticism, although that side of it is attractive too. After all it is a different way of life, a different climate. Georgia has meant an awful lot in my life. It's not so austere down there, manners are more relaxed. I go there often, the Georgians like me a lot, we're of a similar disposition -- they're generally a very musical people. Bitov has started going there all the time too, and you know he wrote a remarkable book about Armenia. Georgia is warm and beautiful, but what's more is that the people are less constrained, more sociable. You might even say there is something mystical about the way a lot of people experience Georgia.

How do you feel about literary critics, I'm thinking about your poem "My Neighbour, the literary scholar?"

- That is, of course, a generalized image. I have nothing whatsoever against literary theory, there are some fine representatives of this genre. If you have a talent for literary scholarship, that's fine, but if you simply make a living praising some and putting others down, well, that's another matter. That is parasitism, and there is a lot of that.

Why did you start writing prose?

- I always thought that sooner or later, a poet will reach a point where he starts writing prose. I have a few purely prose projects in mind right now. I get many requests to write my memoirs. I realize how long I have been in the world and how many people I ought to write about, to honor them. Also I would like to write about Tsvetaeva, I have worked on it a great deal, and it is going to be a long, extended essay, a piece of literary scholarship, you might say, similar to the things she herself wrote about other poets.

Ginsberg said he would like you to come and read your poetry in America, he greatly admires your style.

- Well, what can I say? I'm pleased that he remembers me, he himself is not someone you'd forget. I have read abroad, with reasonable success; of course, there are always a lot of Russians in the audience. But the foreigners, I noticed, were unprepared for this. At first they were terribly surprised by our way of reading, which is so popular here, and then they thought they were watching some kind of new theater. Performing is an art here. Each poet has his own manner of reading. On the whole, this public poetic existence is a speciality of ours, and it has probably created a strange new genre. I say that I have two occupations: writing is one thing, being on stage is the other. It's show, poetic show, and I give myself up to it completely.

1.7. BULAT OKUDZHAVA

Born in 1924 in Moscow. Now living in Moscow. Okudzhava's farther, who was a Georgian, was executed during the Stalin purges. His mother - an Armenian- spent 17 years in a camp. B.O. enjoys enormous popularity as a bard, poet and novelist.
Major publications: Ostrova (1959), Veselyi barabanshchik (1964), Mart velikodushnyi (1967). His prose works, such as "Bud' zdorov, shkoliar"(1961), Bednyi Avrosimov, Puteshestvie diletantov, a.o., have almost all been translated into English.
Last year Ardis published the novel A Taste of Liberty, and two volumes of songs, 65 Songs.
About him: D. Brown, Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin; or K. van Ackern, Bulat Okudzava und die kritische Literatur über den Krig, (München 1976).
B.O. was interviewed in Moscow, May 23, 1984.

Bulat Shalvovich, what are the characteristics of contemporary Russian oral poetry?

- That it is read aloud! You know, here we don't distinguish between oral and written poetry, there is only one poetry and anybody who writes decent verse likes to see it in print. But some things are not published, so we have to perform, to read and sing them.

So the choice of the "oral" genre is not a matter of principle with you?

- No, it isn't a principle, it is simply a result of the impossibility of publishing.

But listening to you is better than reading you!

- That's another matter. Even when I publish I will still perform. But I don't see any fundamental difference. Anyway, you must understand that I don't write much poetry these days; for twelve years now I've been writing prose, although lately I've begun writing poems again.

Your group of bards -- you, Galich, Vysotsky and others -- was, and is, extremely popular and influential. Do you see any parallel to the

development in the West, in America in particular?

- I don't know very much about contemporary American literature, because I don't speak the language and they don't translate much here, especially not the most important, serious stuff. So it's difficult for me to compare. As for my place in the New Wave, that's for you to say, it's unbecoming to speak of oneself. But I can tell you that my roots are in Russian city folklore, in the Russian city romance, speaking of my songs, that is.

But you probably know about Bob Dylan ?

- Dylan, yes, though I don't know him. I can understand when I am compared with Bressons, a man who writes his poetry and sings it. I know Brel and Bressons; they are a lot closer to me, especially Bressons, because he is a serious poet who writes deep and interesting poetry. Sometimes poetry is reduced to a technical means of expressing your thoughts. It becomes superficial, it may not be bad, when the music is good and well performed, but as poetry it's boring. I like good poetry. Sometimes there are poems which the audience doesn't grasp immediately, but it doesn't matter, they will in time. The audience should be awakened and made to think. I don't know Bob Dylan very well. I did listen to a few of his things, but didn't find it very interesting. I'm not saying it's bad, it's just a different trend. Besides, I may be wrong, but it seems to me that a lot of his songs are political.

Lately he seems to be going religious.

- That's his business! As for me, I'm an atheist, that's the way I was brought up. I just don't see how I could believe in God. Atheism is my religion. I respect the believers, but I also want them to respect my "religion." And then, I don't know, all these thoughts that torture me... Maybe I'm not such a bad Christian after all, although I don't believe in God, if you see what I mean.

Could we, maybe, dwell for a moment on your colleagues among the Russian bards?

- Well let me tell you that our first generation in this genre was very strong because the songs relied on the poetry, the tunes were secondary and the singing somewhere, I don't know, but the poems were the main thing. This whole group was very fundamental. It's yongest member was Vladimir Vysotsky. As a poet he was very interesting, but somewhat unfinished. He was perfecting himself and got better and better with each year. Aleksandr Galich[33] was a more accurate and subtle poet, but it seems to me that Vysotsky's potential for unmasking, his gift for the tragic, was greater. That's a matter of taste. And then we had -- and still have -- also in this first group, Novella Matveeva, that's the romantic trend, also very interesting. And also a man who is alive now and doing interesting work, namely Iulii Kim, that tragic clown. A most remarkable phenomenon! Now that was the original group. Afterwards there were a lot of others, some not bad, but most of them not so important.

What did you have in common?

- I'll tell you what we had in common. First of all, the ambition to sing real poetry, to confess, to express ourselves -- and that's the chief task of any artist -- to tell about ourselves, scream about ourselves, in good poetry. That is, you can also scream in bad poetry, but no, all these people were talented, and each told the story of himself in his own way. That was the common thing. Secondly, we shared efforts to deepen the emotional impact of our poetry by means of music. Thirdly, the keenly critical attitude to the world around us.

And friendship?

- I can't say that I was particularly friendly with Galich, he was not my kind of person. With Vysotsky I was friendly, though we were of different generations and different temperaments. When I was beginning and, at thirty-six, already quite well-known, Vysotsky was only twenty-one -- twenty-two. He hadn't taken up the guitar yet, but he was an artist. He loved parties, drinking, crowds, he had lots of friends, whereas I am a loner, I don't like noise or crowds. Therefore, we saw little of each other. But we were very fond of each other.

Were the bards united in one group with the other arts?

- No, we were not one literary group, we were totally different people, different trends, with different literary aims, but we thought alike in human terms, and we were friends, Aksyonov, Gladilin, Iskander and I, say. Of course we thought alike, but we wrote differently; we didn't have a common literary programme. Besides, when Aksyonov, Gladilin and Iskander[34] were already well-known prose-writers, I wasn't even a prose-writer at all. I started late, apart from this one tale which appeared early ["Good luck, Schoolboy!"]. But that didn't make me a prose-writer. I was just a poet writing his autobiography.

Later I began to work at prose seriously. I might mention here a few writers who were my friends and favourites. There was Iurii Dombrovskii, he was a remarkable writer. You must read his novel, The Faculty of Unnecessary Things, which was published in the West -- oi,oi!!. That's his portrait there [points to the wall]. He was a remarkable man, spent twenty years in jail. A very educated man, he had a very hard life right up to his death. He was older than me. A brilliant writer.

What did the war mean to you and your world-view?

- I got caught up in the war at a very tender age, you see, I was seventeen, very romantically inclined and also a "political" boy -- I thought you had to fight the fascists -- and off I went to the war. Well, the romanticism was over in five days, because war is a loathsome, bloody business, very hard, and, besides, the war meant the death of your best friends; every day someone disappears, disappears, disappears. I had a very strong sense of loss and I do to this day. My heart is like a graveyard full of the deaths of my friends, you understand?

You became a pacifist?

- I can't say that, in a literal sense, I became a pacifist, or that pacifism became my religion, no, because if somebody was to attack my house tomorrow, I would pick up a stick and defend my family. That's normal. But I hate war, the army, military music, all that, I simply hate it. To me all these parades and that are totally loathsome. I understand that the state needs them, that it has some goals of its own in this, but I'm not one with the state in this question, I can't be, and they reproach me and scold me and punish me for this. But I can't.

In your poetry and, for that matter, in your novels, you create this

romantic world, this mythical Moscow, where one meets kings, singing ants, Pushkin, etc. To a Dane it is a little like H.C. Andersen's fairy-tale world...

- Well, formally perhaps, but essentially it's no fairy-tale, it's our life I'm expressing, writing as a contemporary. Formally, yes, I used to like characters like that.

So it is not a truly romantic world?

- No, I don't think so, but I find it hard to judge about myself, because I don't think about it. I don't think about who I am, or what I am doing or why. It doesn't interest me. I just want to shout about something. You understand? What is an artist? No matter whether he is a good artist or a bad one, his skin is a little thinner than other people's, reality is constantly stinging him. I simply scream before others, and if my scream disturbs you, it means I've been successful; if not, it means I don't have enough talent and failed. That is art, it goes for painting, music everything. To express oneself, to say what is tormenting you. I don't know... my life has not been easy. It has been unlike that of most of my compatriots and they often don't understand that, they don't think about it. But I do. And so I'm expressing this life, my life experience, my suffering, my everyday tragedy, the flaws of existence, the inconsistency of ideas with reality.

You are a satirist too ?

- Yes, there is a strong critical element in my works; although my satire also has a lyrical flavour, I'm not as sharp as Vysotsky. Vysotsky was a public poet, one who tore off masks, whereas I beat about the bush a bit. I'm also joking a little, as it would seem.

Is your transition from verse to novels going through allegory?

- I must tell you that I don't see any big fundamental difference between poetry and prose. They're just different forms, but the essence is the same; again, I'm expressing myself when I write historical novels: history becomes a means of expressing oneself.

Why did you choose historical themes?

- Well, how can I tell you? History has already happened, so it is easier to survey, and people are the same, their relationships are the same. What has changed are the clothes, the means of transportation, electronics etc., but life is the same, human biology is unchanged. When my readers read my novels about the 19'th century, they say: "I am reading this and it is like reading about myself". And that is really how it is. I don't write historical novels in order to criticize the present.

No?

- No. Of course there are analogies and parallels, but they are not there because I want them to be, but because, objectively speaking, there always are parallels and analogies in history. And how can you think I'd spend five or six years writing a historical novel, gathering materials, only to hint at something contemporary. It's easier for me to write poems about that and sing them. That's very simple and I do that, but that's not what I have in mind when I write novels. Of course not.

How do your readers react to the fact that you now write novels and not poetry?

- Very positively. Well, it's probably fifty-fifty. Fifty percent think my poetry is more interesting than my prose, that the prose is good, but that the poetry is more important. And some think I've said more in my prose, so I'm very pleased. Some think that I write bad prose but that my poetry is good, and I'm pleased with that too. But what pleases me most of all is that a third generation is now singing my songs, my old songs -- what could be better for a poet? I get invited to schools by the kids, not as a singer, but as a guest, and they sing my songs for me. Nobody forces them! I like that, and why it is, I don't understand, because I wrote these songs thirty years ago, about the people of my own age: they're about them, their fate. How these young kids understand my songs, I don't understand, but they sing and by all means let them.

Do you get nostalgic, thinking about those days?

- Well, it was a good time, with great hopes, and illusions. We let ourselves be fooled, in many respects. Many hopes were never fulfilled, but life was very intense in the arts, very, because there were hopes, and therefore we thought that a lot of things were going to change. Unfortunately....

But is it still good to be "A Moscow Ant" ?

- Well, whether I want to or not, we all remain "Moscow ants." We live our lives, love our women -- that will always be there.

1.8. MICHAEL MCCLURE

Born in Marysville, Kansas, 1932. Now living in San Francisco. M.M. has been closely associated with the Beat Generation since his debut in the 50s. Besides being a peculiar experimenting poet with a love for biology, M.M. is a well-known playwright.
Major publications include: Passage (1956), Hymns to St. Geryon and other poems (1959), Ghost Tantras (1964), The Beard (1967), The Mad Cub (1970), September Blackberries (1974), Antechamber (1978), Scratching the Beat Surface (1982).
In Russian: "Preduprezhdenie", Literaturnaia gazeta, January 31, 1961, p.4.
About him: G. Thurley, "The development of a new language: Michael McClure, Philip Whalen, and Gregory Corso", in Lee Bartlett (ed.), The Beats - Essays in Criticism, (McFarland, Lond. 1981); or Margins, No 18, 3/1975 (the whole issue is about M.M.)
Michael McClure was interviewed in San Francisco, September 5, 1983.

Mr. McClure, do you consider yourself part of the Beat Generation?

- Well, in the broadest sense yeah. Originally, I think the Beat Generation was a specific, very small group of people. Originally the Beats were Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs, and maybe Corso, and that's the core of the Beat phenomenon. I knew all these people. First time I gave a poetry reading was the first time Allen read "Howl" and the first time I met Kerouac at the Six Gallery in 1955.[35] I was already familiar with the Black Mountain poets before I met Allen. I met him in 1954. So I was familiar with Duncan, Creeley, Olson, and I was already anti-political in the sense of being an anarchist; and biology had always been my major interest besides poetry and painting. In those days I used to say: "No, I am not part of the Beat Generation," you know, we were friends. Now, historically, I would say: "Yes, there was a Beat Generation, there is a core Beat Generation, I'm not part of that, but I think that the Beat phenomenon represents a mutation of consciousness, such as the ideal Classic, the ideal romantic. I think that the Beat also now functions to make a statement about an approach to nature and to reality. So in the broadest sense I would include myself among the Beats, whereas as a kid I was too arrogant to do so." Now I would think that the Beat phenomenon could also include people who prefer to think of themselves as Black Mountain poets. I mean, I think that it could all be put together in a very large pattern, and I certainly feel part of that.

So in the broad sense the Beat Generation was a shift in consciousness which is still valid, it still has consequences?

- Oh yeah! More important now, and it will be more important in the future.

Is it a literary thing only or is it also social and political?

- I think it is primarily environmental. And I think that isn't understood yet. We were more like the literary wing of the people who were biologically and environmentally conscious. We received more attention than they did at the time because we were engaged in a pact of political defiance regarding the Korean war and the Cold war in the US, so we received a lot of negative publicity, but our friends of those days are the environmentalists and the biologists of today who are doing important work. I see it all as one thing.

But isn't it hard to combine, for example, someone like Kerouac with any environmental approach?

- Not very difficult for me. I said "environmental," "biological" would be more appropriate. Kerouac had one of the finest sensoriums, he had the finest use of eyes, ears, nose that I know of, so in that sense he is an example for all of us. Although we all see differently, we learn to see as Kerouac sees; and our consciousness and our biological awareness is broadened. In other words, he is not writing from the universe of discourse, he is not writing from ideas that already exist, he is writing from his own perception. And that gives emphasis and energy to a biological consciousness, which we see now as close to a broad everyday environmentalism. Rock'n'roll is part of it too, I mean, the Beatles take their name from the Beats. What does rock'n'roll have to do with biology and environmental consciousness? - In the sixties people started dancing, started using their bodies. People who live in abstract ideas don't use their bodies in a free way and they can't think straight; they can only exist in the "One Dimensional Society" that Marcuse speaks about, until they begin some kind of liberation of their body. And that spread out through society today, so that the concern that we had in those days is now on the front pages of the newspapers, and there is a broad general concern about it.

Do you see this as an international phenomenon ?

- Sure, now people want us to come and read in Germany, Holland, or Italy; and they want to get their hands on the things that we had in the fifties and the sixties. It's not that arrogantly and egoistically the Beats started it and everything owes to them. It feeds back. The Green movement in Germany then encourages the anti-nuclear movement here, so that we have 900000 people standing in Central Park making a protest a year ago. It's a very complicated process of feed-back and counter feed-back. It's a very powerful thing that is happening right now.

Do you know anything about the Russian counterparts to the Beats?

- I certainly know about Evtushenko and Voznesensky. I met Evtushenko several times, and I know Andrei [Voznesensky] slightly; I've heard them both read an~~d I've read their~~ poetry.

Do you see them as Beats?

- Sure, it's a copy cat movement. The Russians decided they needed an Allen Ginsberg, so they set up Evtushenko. That's a gross oversimplification, but since I don't know what the Russian politics are, I can only see it in a kind of cartoony way; and in a cartoony way that's what it looks like.

How did you experience the fifties?

- The fifties were cold, militaristic. The youth was viewed as cannon fodder, the U.S. was willing to take on the war in Korea for the protection of a vast system that we had created to surround Russia -- because the US was in the hands of people who had been in the intelligence service in the second World War and had come to leadership in the US at the end of the war and were paranoid about Russia. We were in an antagonistic posture and the entire country was in that antagonistic posture. But young poets had taken on the war in Korea and we were all resisting and we were naive politically. I knew I was an anarchist but I didn't know exactly what an anarchist was, so I found out by living it.

Did you have trouble publishing?

- I wasn't bothered politically, for some reason. My largest censorship trouble was a play of mine called The Beard, which was to the theatre what Ginsberg's "Howl" was to poetry. The trouble began in 1965. The Beard was arrested here for obscenity, they tried to pass a state law against performing it. Then it moved to New York and received two theatre awards, then it moved to London and was received as a theatre classic -- the play is a confrontation between Billy the Kid and Jean Harlow. Then it went to L.A. and was arrested by the police 19 nights in a row. So I went through five years of court cases regarding that. Earlier plays of mine were censored also, productions were cancelled; the book of mine that Kerouac was so anxious to have published, Dark Brown, had to be published by a small press, even City Lights was afraid to sell it, it was sold under the counters.

Why?

- It's sexual! It's hard for people like you Danes to even comprehend how it was here in the fifties. We were living in a state of a cold war. People were looked at...

Even up in the sixties?

- Censorship in this country began to be broken by "Howl," and Grove Press published Burroughs and Henry Miller and D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover -- that began the literary freedom, and then my play came along in the theatre. Grove Press produced it in New York city.

Have the Beats become bourgeois?

- I'm trying. I came from the bourgeois, my parents were bourgeois. But then I had no support of any kind, my wife and I lived in utter poverty from 1954 until 1964. It was beautiful, poverty, there is nothing wrong with being poor. It was a very beautiful, extremely interesting and glamorous life, but I wouldn't mind joining the bourgeois. Does my house look bourgeois to you?

Yes, as a matter of fact, it does. Besides, you have received awards, Snyder got the Pulitzer Prize,Ginsberg...

- Allen hasn't received any awards. I think he should have the Nobel Prize! And I hope he gets it! It's odd that Gary got the Pulitzer, I mean, it's usually given to the worst kind of hacks. People are tremendously impressed by Gary's charisma, so they try to buy him off by prizes.

That's buying him off ?

- They're trying to buy off, that's what's happening by giving Gary the prize, a bourgeois prize. I'm glad that he got it, it's terific.

Who is buying off?

- Oh, the literary establishment.

Of which you're trying to become a part?

- I'm trying to! We should be! In my opinion we are the government in exile; we are the only real poets too.

Don't you feel that there's a contradiction between your position today and in the fifties and the sixties?

- Why should there be?! I mean, even if I have changed completely, why should it be a contradiction ? I think all of us have grown a whole lot. What impresses me is the growth that I have seen in my friends, that is, the soulmaking that goes on, the spiritual growth and the increasing ability to carry out their ideas. When I think of what Gary has done, what Allen has done, what Phillip Whalen has done, what Duncan and Creeley have done, then I'm very glad that these men and women have always been my friends.

You mention Maiakovsky in one of your poems...

- I'm certainly a great admirer of Maiakovsky. I guess that's why I'm not impressed by Evtushenko.

Are you influenced by Maiakovsky?

- I would say so, somewhat. I don't like the term "influence," it's a literary term. The academic American poets in earlier years liked to pretend that they were born fully grown out of Athena's brow. We, on the contrary, have learned very much from one another and we see ourselves as having many sources; but the word "influence" is not appropriate.

Have you heard about the Russian concept of "Transrational Language"?

- There was a movement in Europe in the twenties and the thirties, in Western Europe centered primarily around the magazine and the group of people, called *Transition* , and they invented languages: Hans Arp, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Hugo Ball. Then in France you had a group called the *Lettristes* and then you had Artaud in his great screaming radio broadcast. I'm aware of all that and I'd be surprised if there wasn't a Russian counterpart. I know a little about Khlebnikov and people like that.

Is the language you use in Ghost Tantras also transrational?

- No it is not.

What is it then?

- It comes from an experience I had. First I wrote a play in that language, earlier when I was a kid in 1959. Then in 1962 the language came back to me again, and I felt a ball of silence within myself, and in the ball of silence were those sounds, and I knew that there were going to be ninety-nine poems like that and I wrote them out. You want to hear one of them? I just recited this in Rome. It's a night poem [recites]:

I LOVE TO THINK OF THE RED PURPLE ROSE
IN THE DARKNESS COOLED BY THE NIGHT
We are served by machines making satins
of sounds.
Each blot of sound is a bud or a stahr.
Body eats bouquets of the ears vista.
Gahhhrrr boody eers noze eyes deem thou.
HOH. NAH-OHH

hrooor. VOOR-NAH! GAHROOOOO ME.
Nah droooooh seerch. NAH THEE!
The machines are too dull when we
are lion-poems that move & breathe.
WHAN WEGROOOOOOOOOOOOOOR
hann drëe myketoth sharoo sreee thah noh deeeeeemed ez.
Whan eeeethoooze hrohh.

....but you see, this is not related to Hugo Ball or to Arp or to Schuvetters, I knew nothing about Khlebnikov when I wrote that; but I did grow up reading the Verticalists. It's not that I don't enjoy that kind of poetry but it's not related. It comes from a different place. My poetry comes from the body and theirs comes from the imagination. Mine comes from the imagination too but theirs has an aspiration that's different. Mine is closer to Artaud. The Verticalists, the Transition group, which you would call them in Europe, were trying to make a transrational language, mine is a body language. It has nothing to do with transrational or not -- that's an idea from the universe of discourse and doesn't have anything to do with what I do. I recite *Transition* and *Verticalist* poetry for myself, it entertains me, but I find it mechanical.

Your language is based on English though, and Khlebnikov is, for instance, expressive in a Russian way.

- I call mine "Beast Language." Khlebnikov in translation sounds mechanical.

What role does spontaneity play in your work?

- If I know what I'm going to write I don't write it.

How do you work then without knowing what you are going to do?

- I put my hand on my computer and my typewriter...

How do you know when you are going to write then -- do you start every

morning at nine o'clock ?

- That's pretty personal isn't it?

It's just hard to imagine never writing what you know you are going to write.

- I can't imagine writing something I knew I was gonna write.

1.9. ANATOLII GLADILIN

Born in Moscow, 1935. Now lives in Paris. Was one of the leading figures of the New Wave prose in the late 50s and the 60s. In 1976 A.G. emigrated to France at the peak of a successful literary career in the Soviet Union. Now working at the Radio Liberte, Paris.

Major publications: Khronika vremen Viktora Podgurskogo (1956), Dym v glaza (1959), Pervyi den' novogo goda (1963), Prognoz na zavtra (1972, published in the West), Repetitsiia v piatnitsu (1978), Bol'shoi begovoi den' (1983) a.o.

A.G. has been published in English in several anthologies, but so far only one major (non-fictional) work has appeared -- The Making and Unmaking of a Soviet Writer, (Ardis 1979).

About him: see his Making and Unmaking, and Deming Brown, Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin.

Interviewed in Paris, Radio Liberte, February 13, 1984 (with Mikael Klefter and Ivar Lauge Thomassen)

- Anatolii Tikhonovich, what was the relationship between American and Soviet-Russian Literature of the fifties -- sixties?

- There were influences, you know, without a doubt, reciprochal influences. I remember how, during that particular period, we -- a group of writers: Aksyonov, myself and others -- met with Updike, Albee and other young writers in Moscow. But speaking about influence, I want to tell you a virtual anecdote: When Aksyonov's A Ticket to the Stars was published, the Soviet press immediately started accusing him of plagiarizing Salinger. Looking at the texts, it seemed obvious that here was a case of influence. But in actual fact, there was no influence, for the simple reason that Aksyonov did not read English at the time. Besides, A Ticket to the Stars had been written a long time before it was published, that's the way it is in the Soviet Union. So that, most probably, there was simply something in the air, so to speak. Even without knowledge of contemporary Western literature, confessional prose -- of which I am held to be the originator in Russia -- did appear. This seemed to me both a coincidence and not a coincidence. We were not acquainted with the works of this Salinger, it just so happened that the interest of our young people was mainly in the confessional. As for direct influence, to be honest, I think that we were more influenced by the older American writers.

Faulkner, Hemingway?

- Yes, those...whom we discovered very late. Hemingway, of course, but I myself was very much influenced by Dos Passos in those days, I discovered him just around the time when I was nineteen. I was completely enchanted by the books of Dos Passos. I simply hadn't been able to find them before, they were in the Lenin Library, but in a closed section.

What about the Beat Generation?

- You know, that was later... I saw Ginsberg but was not that close to him. We sat together at a table somewhere and got drunk, but as far as getting to know him well enough to speak of influence...I think our poets probably know him better, Voznesensky and Evtushenko. But the ideas as such, they were in vogue with us too, that is beyond doubt. The idea of revolt! And, of course, this very revolt was awfully difficult to express in the Soviet circumstances, you know, somehow you had to cheat the censors.

Some people don't believe that all this really happened?

- It did, it did, in the stormy sixties, only for a few years, but all this happened. And the slang of the golden youth, not golden, that is, but city youth, the normal language of the young people in the big cities; we brought it into literature with great difficulties, and in doing so we gave it the right to exist. Very difficult it was. That is precisely why we were persecuted. On the whole we had no particular intentions other than simply trying to speak the way our contemporaries spoke.

Did you have any contact to the other Socialist countries, like Poland, for instance?

- Poland yes! That's for sure! Maybe not so much through literature, because the young literature was not much translated. We didn't know foreign languages -- in this respect we envy the Europeans who learn three or four languages from childhood; now the situation is better, but in our time...after all, we were educated under Stalin. Of course, we knew the prose of Marek Hlasko, The Eigth Day of the Week , for instance. But most probably the influence of this literature was translated through Polish cinema. Such films as The Ashes & The Diamond and many others reached us. Besides, we had good contacts with the Poles then.

If it wasn't a question of direct influence from abroad, why did those things happen simultaneously in the Soviet Union and in the USA?

- Now that's another intriguing riddle. But apparently it's because the two big countries, in spite of the enormous differences, do follow certain common laws of internal development. Everything is certainly more difficult in the Soviet Union, but the sixties were the only period in Soviet history so far, when, on a certain level, life in the USSR came to resemble life in other "civilized" countries, if only a tiny little bit.

Was the New Wave a literary movement?

- I don't think the "short prose" was. It was the "city prose" that practically drove all other writers out of the readers' mind. The success of Youth magazine was enormous and it took the appearance of Solzhenitsyn's One Day In the Life of Ivan Denisovich to show that there existed any other literature, any other tradition. We, so to speak, seized all the readers, because youth, after all, was the most important reader at the time. And the young people were in the cities -- those who weren't were trying to get there. The city had its own laws, the city was not only "in," it was also a kind of legislator in the area of public opinion.

As for the "village prose," which became very strong and interesting, it really only appeared and grew strong after the city prose had been virtually suffocated administratively, after Aksyonov and I had been silenced. One could mention other names...

Please do.

- Well, there was this book of Sadovnikov's, The Vanity of Vanities, also from Youth . This one thing of his was published once and that was it, after that he was supressed and now he is writing children's stories and they don't let him publish in any major journals.

Besides, of course, we were imitated by many: one is now an executive secretary of the Writer's Union, he was imitating us and managed to write some quite good stories; one writer, Ilia Krupnik, who is now completely forgotten, used to write very good stories.

Would you include the prose of Okudzhava in the group?

- Oh sure, no doubt about that, although it dealt with the war. And also those writers who did not belong to the city prose in a strict sense: a great, well-known writer like Georgii Vladimov, for instance. They also count as city writers because, say the protagonists of Vladimov's novel, Three Minutes of Silence , aren't really from the country, and Voinovich's best stories also take place in the city. Even [Konstantin] Simonov, who's now the king of the political detective story, the bard of the KGB, he too wrote about city kids then. Afterwards he quickly realized that he wasn't going to make a career for himself that way. And the critics were different then. The most terrible among contemporary critics, Feliks Kuznetsov, used to be our apologist in those days, then he quickly realized that he had to break away and he did.

Anyway, I count [Iurii] Trifonov as one of ours too, that's city prose too, and, [Boris] Balter, Andrei Tarkovsky , the filmmaker, the Taganka Theatre and its leader Liubimov, The Contemporary Theatre -- a revolutionary theatre, though not in the October sense of the word -- but above all, those who were associated with Youth .

And its editor, Valentin Kataev?

- Aksyonov and I once visited him in his summer house and had some cognac. Suddenly his wife asked him to read us young men some of his new work and he read a page about an old man. Up to then we knew him as the author of Lone White Sail and some short stories which nobody had read. When we left his house, we decided that he was an old man and totally off his head, but as it turned out he was in fact developing a completely new and successful style. I would not have written Prognosis for Tomorrow without him and his "Mauvism"[36]- concept.

When did the New Wave actually start and when did it end?

- It started in 1956 with A Chronicle of the Times of Victor Podgursky [by Gladilin] which was published quite unexpectedly to me and others, but Kataev liked it and his daughter even cried when reading it. Then my Smoke in the Eyes in 1959. And Aksyonov became the leader of the movement in one day, because A Ticket To the Stars was an enormous success. The last publication of the New Wave was, if I'm not mistaken, Surplussed Barrelware [by Aksyonov] in 1968. Although it was still possible to publish and to express oneself in the historical series "Flaming Revolutionaries."[37] The editors of this series were stupid, they simply made sure that there was nothing about Trotsky. That's how they overlooked my epigraph: "The Revolution gobbles up its children." I got what seems to me the greatest compliment I ever got for that book, when a friend asked me "How did that novel get through?" Anyway, this historicism is still going on, say, in the works of the late Trifonov. Trifonov was very interested in history and was a genius as a historian. Actually, the day before I left the Soviet Union, I managed to get his great novel, The House on the Embankment. It was like a blow, how could he possibly have published it? Iurii said they didn't change a thing, and he himself couldn't understand why. But the thing is that Trifonov was a Stalin Prize holder, because of Students, and besides he was a bit older, and in the Soviet Union they are careful with the sick!

So that even when everything was over, we still managed to say something now and again. But we got a sign that everything would soon be over as early as in 1963 at the meeting with Khrushchev, because "these young writers were ruining our youth."

Were all the arts part of the New Wave phenomenon?

- Yes, yes, yes! We lived together, we defended each other. All this happened at a happy moment. We were all young and united in our desire to speak the truth. There was only one literature, the city literature, and the city became an intellectual question. But, generally speaking, we were lucky, and we never tried to hide that it was luck. If all this had happened ten years earlier or ten years later they would never have published us. At the moment a lot of shit is published both in the West, among emigrants, and in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union village literature is very popular, because it's the only literature. A few good things are published, after all, but there is no new young prose, either the young are not published, or they are persecuted or they're already in emigration.

Some people assert, that the common feature of the New Wave was a certain brand of irony. What do you think about that?

- I agree. Irony and satire are our only weapons. The Chronicle of the Times of Victor Podgursky is full of the ironies of everyday life. Rehearsal on Friday too.

The motif of the journey seems to very important to the city prose. What does it mean?

- That is a very important factor! The editors gladly paid you a thousand rubles to go on a creative journey, so that we could "go to the people" and they could claim that they "supported the youth." Whereas it was impossible to get three hundred in stead of two hundred rubles for a short story. Therefore, and because we were attracted to movement we travelled a lot. And then it is a motif of freedom -- the flight into other spheres. And, as you know, in Stalin's time you needed a special passport in order to go and see your mother in the country, so the possibility of traveling all over the country was something entirely new to us. All this also had something to do with our young bards, Vysotsky, Galich, Okudzhava, who sang songs of journeys. By the way, one event made a deep impression on me, namely the Moscow Youth Festival in 1957 where we met Western youth for the first time. We had been told that they were unemployed, repressed by stinking capitalism, and what did we see? Free people who would wear anything and say whatever they chose and were afraid of nothing.

1.10. LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI

Born in the U.S.A., 1919. Now lives in San Francisco. L.F. has over the years earned the reputation of being one of the most important contemporary American poets, with a sharp and satirical eye. In 1953 L.F. and Peter Martin founded City Lights Bookstore -- the country's first all-paperback bookstore -- in San Francisco. L.F. is still its director.
Some major publications: Pictures of a Gone World (1955), A Coney Island of the Mind (1958), Her (1966), An Eye on the World: Selected Poems (1967), Open Eye, Open Heart (1976), Endless Life: Selected Poems (1981).
Translations into Russian: "Pes", (Moskva, 12, 1959); "Dlinnaia doroga", "Raga ubiistva", "V parke Zolotykh Vorot v etot den'", "Pavliny khodili", "Gremiashchei mrachnoi zimoi v Parizhe", (Inostrannaia literatura, 11, 1970), pp 179-87; "Mir - prevoskhodnoe mesto", "Goiia v Amerike", (Novyi mir, 9 1970), pp 104-5; "Glaza poeta besstydno vodit", "Riskuia vpast' v absurd", (Sovremennaia amerikanskaia poeziia, edited by A. Sergeev, B. Slutskii a.o., Progres, Moscow 1975).
About him: Larry Smith, Lawrence Ferlinghetti - Poet at Large, (Southern Illinois University Press, 1983); or Neeli Cherkovski, Ferlinghetti - A Biography, (Doubleday, 1979).
Interviewed at City Lights Bookstore, San Francisco, August 29, 1986.

Mr. Ferlinghetti, you have often said that you are not a Beat poet, but all the same you are often associated with the Beats -- what is your relation to the Beat Generation ?

- I got associated with the Beat writers by publishing them, I didn't know them in New York when they were first getting started in the forties. When Allen Ginsberg was in Columbia College I was in graduate school at Columbia University, and I never met him or any of his followers, and then I was in Greenwich Village and they were hanging out at Times Square and Columbia University. Then I went to the University of Paris 1947-51 and I didn't know any of them there and never even heard of them. I was working on a doctorate in French at the Sorbonne, and I was living in a French family, and I didn't know anything about them. So it was only after we started City Lights Bookstore in 1953 and started publishing in 1955 that I started meeting some of the poets that later became known as Beat poets.

But your first two collections of poetry, Pictures of the Gone World and A Coney Island of the Mind seem quite Beat to us ?

- They are ? Well it's just simultaneous publication, they happened to come at the same time. They weren't published here either, except the first edition of Pictures of the Gone World - my publisher was -- and is- - New Directions in New York which is not a Beat publisher. There was French influence more than anything. I didn't have any influence from any of the Beat writers. In fact I rejected the original manuscript of Naked Lunch because I didn't like that kind of writing. It was a junkie sensibility which I didn't appreciate at the time. It wasn't anything I wanted to publish. Only later when the whole opus of Burroughs' work became apparent, later, with the other books, the Naked Lunch fitted into it as a part of a great world view, but having a few scattered pages of Naked Lunch, it was impossible to see that. Burroughs became a great writer after Naked Lunch.

But there seem to be a lot of the same concerns in your work and in the work of the Beats ?

- Well, it was in the air in those days, that was a fifties literary consciousness , in San Francisco that is. The Establishment of poetry was centered around places like Poetry Chicago which was edited by Karl Shapiro. And the Establishment in New York in the early 1950s had no consciousness of the beat poets. They didn't know anything about them and also didn't publish them. And New York publishers didn't have any of the concern with any of the themes which became the main tenets not only of the Beat movement, but of the hippie counterculture of the sixties: the first ecological consciousness, orientation towards Buddhist philosophy or Far East philosophy and a definite anti-war stand, all of which became a big number during the hippie culture. All the things that Ginsberg and Kerouac, Gary Snyder and Philip Whalen were writing about, that was all new to the American literary Establishment. The standard American literary Establishment was writing out of alcohol and had never written from a psychedelic consciousness -- that was new, something that hadn't been done in American literature since the 19th century with Edgar Allen Poe and Fitz Hugh Ludlow.[38]

Do you see this fifties consciousness as an international phenomenon .?

- Oh yes, it didn't have much to do with San Francisco, it was more international. San Francisco got the name for being the place where it all happened, but all the Beat writers, Ginsberg, Kerouac, Corso, Burroughs were all from New York or nearby -- and I was too -- they were New York carpetbaggers.

It seems to us that the new consciousness was an international phenomenon, that it existed in Europe as well, including Eastern Europe?

- Well, I don't know when Evtushenko or Voznesensky first tuned into or made contact with the Beat writers, but it must have been very early. I don't know when Evtushenko and Voznesensky first came and performed in San Francisco, but I remember I performed with Voznesensky at the old Fillmore Auditorium with the Jefferson Airplane - that must have been around 1965, not later. And then I performed here reading translations for Evtushenko at a place called Project Artaud in San Francisco. Both of them were here at least twice.

In the sixties?

- In the seventies too -- you know that book of ours, Literary San Francisco? There are some posters in there of Evtushenko and Voznesensky . . . I have also been at festivals in various other parts of the world with them. Allen and Voznesensky and I did a tour of Australia in 1972 with my son Lorenzo who was eleven years old then. We sold out -- or they sold out the town halls in Melbourne and Sydney. No one had ever seen anything like that in Australia, Ginsberg being a master publicist! We were going to the Adelaide Festival -- that's what was paying for the ticket -- and when we got off the plane in Adelaide, Allen found out that no blacks, no aboriginees had ever been invited to the Adelaide Festival. And so he told the press that he was performing with some aboriginees on stage. He went to the Department of Anthropology and there just happened to be some aboriginees being recorded there and so he announced that they would go on stage with him and be part of his act. So naturally there was a full page headline, it was on the front page of the Adelaide paper, it said "Aboriginees to perform at Adelaide festival." It seems to me the director at the time was from South Africa or had South African connections, I'm not so sure, anyway you had the feeling there was a

South African apartheid-type policy at the festival. And so of course with those banner headlines on the Adelaide papers there was a line three blocks long just like at a Beatles concert. Actually, at the Melbourne Town Hall Voznesensky was picketed for some current action by the Russian government . The pickets' parade went down the aisles and stopped the show just when Voznesensky was about to read. So we were standing there and Andrei says to me, "Lawrence what shall I do?" So I told him, "Don't do anything. Just stand there completely motionless."So we stood motionless and they finally went away and let him continue. But, I mean, he couldn't say anything. About the rest of that tour... there is a page from a Melbourne newspaper, a big headline that said "Riot at Poets' Recital -- Three Policemen Bitten"! Some of the women protesters bit the policemen.

You've translated both Evtushenko and Voznesensky - what do you think of them as poets?

- Well I worked with some translators from the University of Washington and the University in Vancouver, but I don't know Russian, I was just tuning it up into English. They gave me a literal translation from the Russian and I sort of tuned them up. You see we had a very shallow context to judge them in because they were at that time the only poets the USSR ever exported to the Western world. So we don't see very much of the context. I know when I was in Russia in 1967 -- I took the Transsiberian Railway from Moscow to Vladivostok..

And you "damn near died" you said somewhere?

- That's true! I took that Transsiberian because of Blaise Cendrars' "Sur Le Transsiberien,"[39] because I thought he had taken the train, but I found out later he had never taken it, it was all in his imagination. But before I took the train I was in Moscow long enough to go to the theatre that Voznesensky was sponsoring and where he had plays . . .

The Taganka?

- Yes, the Taganka. And the night I was there there was a performance of Ten Days That Shook the World, a dramatization of John Reed's book, an extraordinary production, really, I have some notebooks where I have the handbills from the performance, replicas of the original handbills from 1917 which were scattered down over the audience during a battlescene; during the insurrection scene they had the smoke and the guns going off and these handbills flooded down over the audience through the smoke.

Sounds like Liubimov's production?

- It was. Voznesensky and I had had a reading together in Berlin at a university and he couldn't go home just then because he was touring Germany, but he called up his wife in Moscow and I got my visa in two days in Berlin and his wife met us at the train - I was with a German translator -and then she took us to the theatre. We sat in the front row there, and then I think there was also a Voznesensky play in production then, but I didn't see that one. Then when we went to the Transsiberian train she came to the station with a big wicker basket full of food and bottles of vodka... I went to the Writers' Union one day in Moscow and met with some of the old warhorses that run the Writers' Union - mostly widows of the 1917 revolution, and we were around a table and they had little glasses of vodka and they drank so many that I couldn't keep up with them. Some other night we were in the Taganka district, right by the theatre, and there seemed to be quite a bit of hard drugs in the neighbourhood, and also some guys whom they pointed out to me as being the Beatniks, who were in black leather - I used to know the word they used for them..

Stiliagi?

- Yes. So I don't know what the context was, how Voznesensky and Evtushenko fitted in with the stiliagi. I had the feeling they were more street people, whereas Evtushenko and Voznesensky were established, approved writers, that the Writers' Union officially approved of them. Voznesensky lived in one of the few highrises in Moscow and Evtushenko had a dacha out at Peredelkino. So they weren't excactly street people by the time we got there in 1967. Were there many writing in their style in Russia ?

Well yes, they did have a genuine kind of popularity, also among the original "Beatniks."

- Evtushenko always says that he reads to audiences of hundreds of thousands in

Russia.That was in the Sports Palace and it happened only a few times in the sixties, but I don't think it is happening any more. I may be wrong!

No, the young generation today despises Evtushenko and Voznesensky.

- They do? Why is that ?

It might be unfair, but they think they have sold out..

- You mean the young generation feel that they are more to the left than the poets rather than the other way around? You see in this country poets in general are more and more looked down upon by the emerging yuppie culture. Our coffeehouses here in North Beach are being overrun by yuppies and businessmen with briefcases going to work downtown in the morning. I had to take refuge up the sidestreet and I went into my favourite coffeehouse and it was just full of, what we used to call 'straights' or 'squares' in the fifties and sixties. The difference is you might find some cocaine in their briefcases! It is what we have now taking over, a sort of 'gentrification' of this district that used to be the bohemian district and it is also happening across the country. So poetry is in a very bad way in the US these days on account of this general feeling of Reaganocracy. Reaganocracy is a plutocracy, the government of the rich for the rich by the rich! The age of the technocrat.

Does that make you sad, when you think of the things you and the Beats have been fighting for for such a long time?

- Well no, I mean, I wouldn't use that word. Reagan is just a passing apparition, I hope.

But it is not only Reagan, it's the way people think and act, the whole yuppie culture..

- Well that's right, it's a technocratic consciousness. But we are editing a new City Lights Journal, we haven't done one in quite a few years, and we're doing a lot with that theme in the journal, what's happening today. In fact, the lead article is going to be by a Romanian emigre named Andre Codrescu, and it's just on this subject.

So you still believe that you can make a difference?

- Well yeah, definitely !

When we speak to Russian poets, they tell us how they feel needed by their readers, they're not afraid of using that word -- do you feel needed as a poet in America?

- Yeah, definitely! They don't know they need us. In Russia people seem to know they need the poets -- here they don't know they need us!

Voznesensky and Evtushenko are quite isolated now, the Russian writers living over here, for instance, don't accept them..

I met that Russian writer living in New York, Limonov, in fact, the way I met him was Evtushenko was here once and he told me about him, he said there was this young Russian writer somewhere in New York, he said he was probably living in the streets, that he was probably homosexual and that he was very vulgar. And so I tracked him down in New York city, he was working as a houseboy, a butler in an elegant townhouse on the Upper East Side..

When was that?

- Oh about ten years ago. He gave me the manuscript of his book in the form it was in at the time, and I brought it back here and read it. It needed a lot of work and I wrote and suggested a lot of things, but he didn't want to do any of them, so that's the last I heard from him. And later someone else published it, it's still not a very good book (It's Me, Eddy), but he and Evtushenko evidently had some correspondance or some friendship at the time.

But since then Edward Limonov and Konstantin Kuzminsky and others have published the Blue Lagoon anthology of Russian underground poetry, where they put down everybody including Evtushenko and Voznesensky. They call themselves the true Russian Beats, and they accuse the American Beats of having gone bourgeois..

- Do they? Do you have a copy of this anthology or could you maybe send me the name and address of the publisher ? How long has it been out ?

Since 82, I guess..

- So how does this Russian poet who has made it big in the US fit in?

Joseph Brodsky ? He doesn't really fit in, he is alone..

- So he is against those Russian Beats and against Voznesensky and Evtushenko as well?

He seems to be against most, except those who are dead..

- I know, I was at the World Congress of Poets in Florence earlier this summer, he was there. He seemed to be against everything.

But he is a good poet.

- There was a review of Brodsky in the New York Times about a month ago, and it said that he was the greatest living Russian poet in the Leningrad tradition, and that he should be put in the category of the greatest Russian masters, very surprising...

What do you think of Voznesensky and Evtushenko as poets?

- Well in translation, it seems to me that their poetics is way back somewhere, way behind modern American poetry..

Maiakovsky?

- Yes, I know it's the Maiakovsky tradition, the good part of Voznesensky's and Evtushenko's poetry is in the Maiakovsky heroic style, I think, their performances being in the heroic style, performance poetry, which I think has had quite an effect on the San Francisco poets -- as I said, they read here several times -- that was one of the affinities that they had with us. We always here had a big thing about reading the poetry aloud, it had to make it aloud, that was more important than on the printed page, and we have poets here like Jack Hirschman who is a well known translator . He says he speaks Russian and he says he knows many languages and when he reads, he reads a bit like Maiakovsky, the same style, I mean as far as I know, of the way Maiakovsky read, he reads the same way that Evtushenko and Voznesensky read. Evtushenko comes out like a discus-thrower from Smolensk.

But perhaps its really wrong to talk about Evtushenko and Voznesensky as one -- they are very different after all?

- Oh yes. Voznesensky is more interior, more intimate.

Evtushenko always seems to say exactly what you expect him to say,

- As I started with saying, I performed with him at a lot of foreign festivals, for instance at the Festival di Roma in 1979 and in 81. At least one time -- I was there several times -- at least one time Evtushenko was there. The first one at Ostia -- that was the big one when they had 10000 European hippies at Ostia.There was a big riot, it was like the Italian Woodstock, and Evtushenko refused to go on stage. It was on the beach, there was 10000 hippies out there in sleeping bags at night. I was supposed to read the English, and he said they had no respect for poetry, but he was being very careful because there is a big Russian community there, and he didn't want to be associated with these rebels. This was just 3 years after Pasolini had been murdered at Ostia. Pasolini was killed there at a seaplane landingbase, at a sort of a concrete area right near the beach, and the press took us there, Voznesensky, Ginsberg and a whole bunch of others, and we went to where Pasolini was killed, and they stuck the microphones in our face and asked us what we thought of it. Evtushenko had to be careful what he said there, so he didn't say anything. I didn't know much about Pasolini before that trip. So I didn't say anything either! but since then I translated him with an Italian lady who was head of the Italian Cultural Institute here -- Francesca Valente.

It's interesting that you are making liasons between the American Beat Generation and the Russian poets. This is also an interesting liason: Pasolini was very much attracted to American radicals of the sixties generation and he came to New York once about 1968 and he wrote in his diary how excited he was. He compared it to European intellectuals and the radicals in France and Italy at that time, and they were so much more enmeshed and inmired in typical European intellectualism. It was very refreshing to Pasolini when he came to the US and saw this much more direct approach, all the old intellectual bullshit cut through. In his diary among other things, he said: "it has been a long time since I read anyone with so much fraternal feeling as I did in reading Allen." This was in 1968. Then he wrote a long letter to Allen of which I have a copy, in which he very much admired the American poets and intellectuals. But the letter itself was so typical -- from an American point of view -- so over-intellectual...spaghetti prose!

But the Russians always looked to the Americans as soon as they had a chance.

- You interviewed Voznesensky, what did he say?

He says, like the others, that they felt a kind of kinship when they discovered the Beats.

- But there wasn't really much published of the Beats in Russia?

No, but they started reading English.

- When I went to Russia in 1967 I wrote a poem called "Moscow in the Wilderness, Segovia in the Snow" and there was also an LP record of it, and I gave the record to both Voznesensky and Evtushenko, and I remember I gave them copies of the poem, and they said that they could get it published in Russia, but it never got published. At least I never heard of it.

You had some poems published in Russia though. Some in anthologies and some in newspapers too, "Dog," for instance.

- But "Moscow in the Wilderness" couldn't get published because it was specifically about the freeze of freedom, it was a very political poem.

In another poem "Wooden Russia Still" you were searching for the Russian anarchists, did you ever find them?

- No, of course I never did. Well I would like to go there in the summertime. I was there in the middle of the winter when all Russia was under three feet of snow if not more. It was like being in the 19th century, 19th century Russia, once you got away from Moscow. And even Moscow itself -- under a heavy blanket of snow in the dark of the winter it was like the 19th century -- dark, huddled masses of people going along these enormous boulevards and these enormous mausoleum-size buildings -- and it was like the dark, huddled masses in Pushkin or Gogol. I would like to go in the summer when I could get some idea of Russia underneath the snow, the way it is today. I would really like to go to Leningrad.

Do you know Vassily Aksyonov? We saw his novel The Burn downstairs in the bookstore.

- No, I've never met him, and I haven't read The Burn.

It tells the story of the Russian "Beat" movement, in a very Beat manner.

- Oh really. I should go down and get it.

Footnotes: Part One.

1. Herbert Huncke, a Times Square hustler and drug addict who became a code figure for Ginsberg, Burroughs, and Kerouac. He introduced them to both the hipster argot and the New York subculture.

2. Philip Whalen (1923 -) and Ray Bremser (1934 -) - - American poets, associated with the Beat Generation. Robert Duncan (1919-) and Robert Creeley (1926-) American poets, belonging to the Black Mountain school.

3. Sergei Esenin (1895 - 1925) and Nikoloai Kliuev (1887 - 1937) - - Russian Imagist poets. "A slap in the face of the public taste" was a Futurist manifesto written by Vladimir Maiakovsky, David Burliuk a.o.

4. Must mean Yarmolinsky's translation -- Avron Yarmolinsky, ed. and trsl., Russian Poetry: An Anthology, 1927.

5. Hart Crane lived from 1899 to 1932; Vladimir Maiakovsky from 1893 to 1930.

6. Neal Cassady (1926 - 1968) -- one of the people responsible for the emergence of the Beat Generation. N.C. provided Ginsberg and Kerouac with a living example of the 'Beat' way of life. Portrayed by Kerouac in Visions of Cody and On The Road. Lew Welch (1926 -1971) -- American poet, associated with the Beat Generation.

7. Ann Waldman (1945 -) - -American poet and teacher at the Naropa Institute (see note 11). A.W. has written about the Beat Generation.

8. Konstantin Simonov (1915 - 1979) --well-known Soviet writer and playwright.

9. LeRoi Jones (1934 -) -- well-known black American poet, associated with the Beat Generation. Jones who later changed his name to Amiri Baraka was the editor of the journal Floating Bear. Aleksandr Ginzburg - Soviet dissident who edited the samizdat journal Sintaksis in the early 70s. Imprisoned and later expelled to the West.

10. William Jay Smith (1918 -) -- American poet.

11. Naropa Institute -- The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. Founded in 1974. Ginsberg is at present the co-director of the institute.

12. Boris Slutskii (1919 -) -- Soviet poet. In the following Mr. Voznesensky advances some theories and statements which could seem questionable, e.g. his statement about the democratic principle behind Soviet publishing. Here and elsewhere in the interviews, it must be stressed, the statements and opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the interviewers.

13. Vladimir Soloukhin (1924 -) -- Soviet writer.

14. Aleksandr Chizhevskii (1897-1964) -- famous Soviet scientist.

15. Lily Brik (1890 - 197?) -- wife of the Russian Futurist critic and literary theoretician Osip Brik. Notorious for her love affair with Vladimir Maiakovsky.

16. Velimir Khlebnikov (1885 - 1922) - - Russian poet - Futurist.

17. On March 8, 1963 General Secretary Khrushchev summoned the young artists, writers, and filmmakers to a meeting at the Kremlin and put pressure on them to conform to the party line. The meeting is vividly recaptured in Aksyonov's novel The Burn.

18. Vladimir Dudintsev (1918 -) - Soviet writer, famous for the novel Not By Bread Alone (1956). Vl.D. is at the present in the limelight again with a new controversial novel to be published in the Soviet Union.

19. "children of important enemies of the people" - Aksyonov's parents were arrested and spent more that a decade in different camps in Siberia. Aksyonov's mother, Evgenia Ginzburg, who died in 1979, was the author of one of the best accounts of life in Stalin's camps - see her Journey Into The Whirlwind (1967).

20. Evgenii Rein -- Leningrad poet, participated in the notorious Metropole almanak; David Dar was married to the famous Soviet writer Vera Panova. Iosif Brodsky and Tolia Neiman -- Leningrad poets -- called "Akhmatova boys". Brodsky is now the most successful poet in emigration.

21. Vladimir Pomerantsev (1907 -197?) -- Soviet writer and critic, associated with the Thaw. Valentin Kataev (1897 - 1986)-- well-known Soviet writer. In the early sixties V.K. was the editor of the journal Youth.

22. Iurii Kazakov (1927 - 1983) -- Soviet writer, closely associated with the Thaw and the New Wave.

23. Ernst Neizvestny (1925 -) -- famous Russian sculptor. Emigrated in 1976, E.N. now lives in New York and in Sweden. About his relationship with the New Wave and popular American culture, see our interview with him in Russian Language Journal, Nos 136-7, 1986.

24. Samsik Sabler -- fictional character (jazz musician) in several of Aksyonov's works.

25. Liosha Zaurikh -- Soviet poet of the same generation.

26. Chingiz Aitmatov (1928 -) -- well-known Soviet-Kirgizian writer.

27. Eduard Limonov (1943 -)-- Russian emigree poet and writer. Well-known for his "scandalous" novel It's Me, Eddie.

28. Iurii Nagibin (1920 -) -- Soviet writer,

29. A. Flaker, Modelle der Jeans Prosa: zu literarischen Opposition bei Plenzdorf im

osteuropäischen Romankontext, (Kronberg 1975.)

30. Anatolii Kuznetsov (1929 - 1979) -- Soviet writer, defected to England in 1969.

31. Some of these non-official Leningrad writers have been published in a huge (5 volume) publication dedicated to the non-conformist poetry of the Leningrad subculture in the late sixties - early seventies: The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry, edited by K.K. Kuzminsky and G.L. Kovalev , 1980 [in Russian].

32. Gleb Gorbovskii who used to be an underground poet is now being published officially. Bobyshchev, Kushner, and Gorbovskii are published in The Blue Lagoon Anthology. See note 31.

33. Aleksandr Galich (1918 -1977) -- Russian poet and folk singer, one of Russia's most famous unofficial bards. Emigrated to the West in 1974; Novella Matveeva and Iulii Kim - - Russian poets and bards.

34. Fazil Iskander (1929 -) -- a native of Abkhazia, F.I. is a popular writer both in the Soviet Union and in the West.

35. Six Gallery in San Francisco -- the place where the Beat Generation was first made known to the public in 1955 - 1956 at poetry readings by McClure, Ginsberg, Snyder a.o.

36. "Mauvism" -- literary style invented by Kataev and applied to his later works.

37. "Flaming Revolutionaries" -- a series of historical novels published by Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi literatury, Moscow. Among the contributers were Gladilin, Aksyonov, Trifonov and Okudzhava.

38. Fitz Hugh Ludlow (1836 - 1870) -- American critic and writer. Author of the novel The Heart of the Continent (1857), which deals with the problem of drug addiction.

39. Blaise Cendrars (1887 - 1961) -- Swiss poet and novelist.

PART TWO

The Beat Generation and the New Wave in the context of society.

(by Inger Lauridsen and Per Dalgård)

2.1. THE SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND.

Ever since the nuclear explosions in Japan and the creation of the Power Balance the world has been kept in a state of terror.[1] The idea of an apocalypse is not new, but the division of the world into two powers, each with nuclear capabilities of grotesque dimensions, has brought with it an awareness of the real possibility of a Third and Final World War.

The basic condition of fear and insecurity following the war created in both the USA and the USSR a psychological environment of conformism; and, in time, as a reaction to this environment a new consciousness was born to which the Beat Generation and the New Wave lent their voices.

In the USA, conformity was symbolized by the vast and growing suburbs where people lived in identical houses and pursued identical goals of material success. Striving for material well-being and seeing one's efforts validated by the fact that everyone else was doing the same thing created a certain illusion of security in the conformist segments of the population, that is, among the middle class. But in order to maintain such an illusion in the face of the post-war facts, fear and suspicion must be directed away from the private sphere and projected onto an Enemy; everything contradictory to the illusion, that is, all non-conformist elements, must be repressed. A. LaVerne Peterson describes this mechanism in his study of its most extreme result, McCarthyism. In a society trying to escape from anxiety, he writes,

> it was not so strange that many individuals did attempt to rid themselves of the unwanted self, did attempt to trandscend themselves.In the socio-political context some did so by hate, finding the evil in themselves expiated through a transfer of guilt to another segment of the society, to another class, to the alleged communists and communist supporters.[2]

In post-war American foreign policy the fight against world communism served as a rationale for the ever escalating arms race, and from here it was only one step to the fight against domestic communism. Senator Joe McCarthy made this fight his cause, and in doing so showed shrewdness as a political opportunist. He was not deterred by the fact that, after the war, the American Communist Party attracted less than 1 % of the voters; indeed, perhaps the Enemy he pointed out was the more frightening for being almost invisible and truly alien. Not only communists, but also liberals and other 'subversive elements' fell under suspicion for having adopted 'un-American' values. The seeds sown by McCarthy fell on fertile ground: paranoia spread among Americans, who followed his crusade on television, and grew to such proportions that official policy could not be untouched by it. In the words of D. Miller and M. Nowach:

> Though Truman would later complain of the "great wave of hysteria" sweeping the nation, his commitment to victory over communism, to completely safeguarding the United States from external and internal threats, was in large measure responsible for creating that very hysteria. Between the launching of his security programme in March 1947 and December 1952, some 6,6 million persons were investigated. Not a single case of espionage was uncovered, though about 500 persons were dismissed in dubious cases of "questionable loyalty". All of this was conducted with secret evidence, secret and often paid informers, and neither judge nor jury. Despite the failure to find subversion, the broad scope of the Red hunt gave popular credence to the notion that the government was riddled with spies. A conservative and fearful reaction cursed the country.[3]

Wisconsin Republican Party leader A. LaVerne Peterson devotes much attention to the 'methods' of McCarthyism,[4] which he compares with and finds similar to the methods of "totalitarianism" (as practiced in such countries as the USSR), thereby implying that McCarthyism itself posed a greater threat to American democracy than domestic communism ever did. The reason for the widespread endorsement of "totalitarian" methods in the Red witch-hunt Peterson finds in the socio-psychological upheavals that were taking place in post-war America. Mass urbanization, secularization, increased mobility, mechanization had made people psychologically, spiritually and familially confused and insecure:

> They seek something or someone to restore a certain sense of meaning and stability to their vastly reoriented life, stability and meaning which the organizations and values of contemporary American life have taken from them.[5]

One of the Beat poets, Michael McClure, describes the spirit of the age in the following terms:

> The fifties were cold, militaristic. The youth was viewed as cannon fodder, we were willing to take on the war In Korea for the protection of a vast system that we had created to surround Russia -- because the US was in the hands of people who had been in the intelligence service in the second World War and had come to leadership in the US at the end of the war and were paranoid about Russia. (see Interview, p. 69)

And when we asked Allen Ginsberg about the kind of repression practised in the USA and the USSR in the 50s and 60s, he replied:

> Well, it must be much tougher in Russia than here, incredibly tougher to survive if you open your mouth, really , as forcefully as we can here. The other thing is that if you open your mouth there and get hurt it means something - whereas here it doesn't mean anything, it'll be drowned by television in two seconds. (See interview, p. 10)

It was, of course, much tougher in the Soviet Union. During the war, repressions had been eased a little in order to stimulate people's patriotic feelings and rally them in the fight against the Nazis. However, when the war ended, Stalin had rewarded his exhausted nation with a new wave of repressions -- national groups were forcibly resettled on a massive scale as punishment for being 'disloyal', thousands of ex - prisoners of war came home only to be sent to forced labor camps etc. Relief came only after Stalin's death on March 5, 1953.

Even while the struggle for power in the Kremlin was going on, changes took place in society. On March 27 an amnesty was proclaimed that cancelled investigations and proceedings concerning a large number of more or less invented crimes,[6] and soon many concentration camps began to release their prisoners. "Stalin's butcher," Beria, was executed, the secret police (NKVD) came under party control and a number of its executives were put on trial in order to reinstate "socialist legality." In short the Thaw had begun:

> Apart from lopping of such excrescences of Stalinism as mass terror, the leaders hastened to improve the standard of the population. Whether because of common sense or fear of an explosion of pent-up popular discontent now that the man, who had hovered "over us like a dead spirit", was no longer there, they saw the need for economic improvements.[7]

Food prices and taxes were reduced, technological progress and industrial development lead to mass urbanization, and the new leader, Nikita Khrushchev, introduced his agricultural reforms. A period of experimentation and hopes for the future had begun -- a period of liberalization at home and relaxation of international relations, in a spirit of optimism comparable to the American optimism of the Kennedy era.

But liberalization clearly had its limits, as would be apparent already in 1956 when Soviet tanks crushed the Hungarian revolt. Throughout the period of Khrushchev's leadership the neo-Stalinist or conservative opposition in the party was a force to be reckoned with, and Khrushchev's fall from power in October 1964 reflected not only the fiasco of his many desperate improvisations in foreign and domestic policy, but also the discontent in parts of the party with the anti- Stalin spirit of the time.[8]

The new collective leadership of Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgornyi marked a return to conservative stability, and the beginning of a *status quo* policy, which, while accepting the reforms of the Khrushchev era as a *fait accomplit*, made sure they went no further.[9]

In his secret speech to the closed session of the 20th Party Congress in February 1956, Khrushchev denounced some of Stalin's crimes, saying, among other things:

> Stalin originated the concept "enemy of the people". This term made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality.[10]

Terms such as " enemy of the people" or "cosmopolite" were, in fact, dropped. But when charges of "anti-Sovietism" appeared in trials of prominent writers and dissidents immediately after Khrushchev's fall, it seemed that little had been gained.[11]

The fact that such terms as "anti-Sovietism" and "un-Americanism" are mirror images of each other, both being tools designed to make people conform to a norm, is an indication that during the fifties American Society had more in common with Soviet society that at any other time (the important difference is, perhaps, that while in the USA the fear of the "un-Americans" was greater that the fear of being accused of "un-Americanism", in the USSR it is the other way round, the persecution of dissidents being official government policy). Allen Ginsberg, when we interviewed him, made the comparison between the McCarthyite and the post-Stalinist environments from which the Beat Generation and the New Wave emerged (see interview, p. 8).

Soviet society, on the other hand, of the late 50s -early 60s, was at its most liberal and seemed more similar to American society than at any other time; the hopes kindled by the changes survived several setbacks and lingered on for a while after the period of reform was in effect over. All the Russian writers, interviewed for this thesis, testified to this, and one of the New Wave pioneers, writer Anatolii Gladilin, when asked why similar phenomena such as the Beat Generation and the New Wave occured in the USA and the USSR, said:

> Now that's another intriguing riddle, but apparently it's because the two big countries, in spite of the enormous differences, do follow certain common laws of internal development. Everything is certainly more difficult in the Soviet Union, but the 60s were the only period in Soviet history so far when, on a certain level, life in the USSR came to resemble life in other civilized countries, if only a tiny little bit. (See interview, p. 77)

The point to be made here is that the socio-political circumstances that produced the two movements were comparable, American society of the 50s being relatively repressive and Soviet society of the late 50s - early 60s being relatively liberal. The Beat Generation was the product of an environment which made it impossible not to speak up, while the New Wave was the product of an environment which made it possible to speak up; but the things they had to say, the things they reacted against, and the reactions they incurred, were, as we shall see, fundamentally similar, as if they were an American and a Russian eruption of the same subcultural phenomenon.

Before defining what we mean by "subculture," we shall take a look at some comparisons of the two superpowers which have appeared in connection with various theories of convergence.

2.1.1. Convergence?

When we asked the Russian sculptor Ernst Neizvestny why he chose to live in the USA after leaving the Soviet Union, he answered: "Mainly because I want to finish my monument The Tree of Life . For psychological reasons only two countries, Russia and America are able to go for that."[11] Neizvestny is implying here a specific "superpower consciousness," which, to him, includes broad-mindedness and vision. Similar features were emphasized by P. Sorokin, who was a minister in Kerenskii's government and thus himself a representative of "what might have been." In his book Russia and the United States from 1944, Sorokin advanced an early theory of convergence, summing up the basic, mental characteristics common to the two "great powers" as follows:

> freedom from rigid mono-nationalistic traditions and social and cultural patterns, open-mindedness and breadth of mental outlook, cosmopolitanism and self-esteem ... independence of thought,tolerance of the opinions, manners and costums of others.[12]

Such a view today seems stunningly naive, but it is reflected in the images of Holy Russia and Holy America such as we find them, for instance, in Aksyonov and Kerouac.

In reality, another, contradictory, aspect of superpower consciousness, namely its narcissism, has come into the foreground: 10 meter tall letters on a Moscow bridge spelling out "Hail the Great Soviet People!", an American politician on tv saying "We, the greatest nation on the face of the Earth,..." Each of the two superpowers, while taking credit for such qualities as those mentioned by Sorokin, confers the negative opposites upon the other. In May Man Prevail?, Erich Fromm describes the resulting American perception of the USSR in terms which are just as applicable to the Soviet perception of the USA:

> The enemy appears as the embodiment of all evil because all evil that I feel in myself is projected on to him. Logically, after this has happened, I consider myself as the embodiment of all good since the evil has been transferred to the other side. The result is indignation and hatred against the enemy and uncritical narcissistic self-glorification.[13]

The narcissism of superpower consciuousness is, in both countries, official, the one transmitted to the social groups least resistant to ideological propaganda, that is, to the average dependable Soviet citizen and the "red-neck" mainstream in American society, which Gary Snyder described in the following way:

> It's a term for very playful, very relaxed, anti-intellectual racist, good-natured, physical people who drink a lot, drive pick-up trucks, have a good time, are really good friends if they are friends, and who have a certain kind of limited perspective and who are, in a sense, natural anarchists. (see interview, p. 42)

We believe that, pick-up trucks excluded, this description would fit the well-adjusted average Soviet man as well. The large majority of people in the USA and the USSR support the system in their own country unquestioningly and believe that the people in the opposite country are all dissidents,[14] and both the red-neck mentality and the superpower consciousness are certainly reflected in the literatures of the two countries.

But both countries' awareness of their own moral superiority is also the basis of the two kinds of "optimistic" theories of convergence: the Marxist view that an inevitable World revolution will take place bringing about the communist paradise on Earth, and the Western view that the USSR must in time develop into a pluralistic society.

In Soviet And American Society Paul Hollander, who represents the optimistic Western view on convergence explores "The Nature and Propagation of Values: Advertising and Propaganda."[15] Advertising and propaganda are the main tools used for securing conformity in the USA and the USSR (although, of course, there are other tools as well). While one is economic, and the other ideological of nature, both are selling a way of life, and the freedom not to buy in both cases seems to be illusory. Hollander finds similarities between the two, not only on the empirical level, but also in the actual values, they propagate, and in their effect on people.

Advertising and propaganda are equally pervasive and omnipresent, they use the same media, both make unverifiable claims, both rely on such techniques as slogans and repetition, and both distort language while depersonalizing and standardizing values.

Official Soviet morality, as transmitted through propaganda, has much in common with the bourgeois ethic of advertising. Both emphasize such values as patriotism and national pride, hard work for society, brotherhood, moral purity, the family, law and order, freedom etc.

Both advertising and propaganda create a credibility gap between the individual and the entire social world. The incommensurability of the world of advertising and propaganda and the real world is taken for granted by the people.

This gap, the perception of society as wholly beyond the control of the individual, is one of the features of the so-called Mass Society. While Hollander does not accept this concept as descriptive of both American and Soviet society, it underlies the third, pessimistic kind of convergence theories, according to which both societies will develop into Orwellian administrative machines. The idea of mass society is expressed metaphorically by Patrick Thunderjet, one of the protagonists of Aksyonov's The Burn:

> There is no such thing as the "mysterious Slav soul," just as there is nothing left of the "great American dream" in today's world either. There are just two monstrous octopuses, two gigantic bags of half-dead protoplasm, which can only react to external stimuli in two ways: by contraction or by absorption.[22]

The theory about the internal functionings of such creatures is outlined by A.G. Meyer in Theories Of Convergence:

> Both the Communist world and the highly developed nations of the West are said to be moving toward a social and political system marked by centralization and authoritarianism, with gross political inequalities perpetuated by irresponsible elites wielding unprecedented power. In this world of the future, state and society will have merged into one bureaucratized order. True politics openly and freely pursued by all citizens will have disappeared, and all social life will have become politicized, meaning that it will have become a matter of public concern and political control, regulation and coordination. Bureaucratic

> techniques and regulations will have supplanted and replaced law... The slogan of "law and order" will then have turned into a smoke screen of tyranny.[17]

In this society the complex human person will disappear "hopelessly exposed to the manipulations of giant monopolistic bureaucracies and to propaganda." We believe that, on a highly abstract level, the mass society, or in Marcusean terms, the one-dimensional society, is the common denominator for what the Beat Generation and the New Wave, rather subjectively, saw as those socio-political trends in their societies, which they spontaneously opposed themselves to. It must be stressed, that this model was not clearly percieved by the writers and poets at the early stage, since neither of the movements had any clear and well developed philosophy. At the early stage, the movements reacted spontaneously and in a rather romantic manner to the general atmosphere of the time. In the following, therefore, we shall develop a concept of "subculture" against the background of the one-dimensional society as Marcuse sees it.

2.2. SUBCULTURE AND THE 'ONE-DIMESIONAL" SOCIETY.

American social critics of the 50s all, in one way or another, dealt with the concepts of Mass Society and Conformism.[1] Erich Fromm, in interpreting conformity as an escape from the burdens of freedom, came close to the ideas developed by Herbert Marcuse.[2] The New Left of the 50s - 60s represented the political wing of the search for a "third way", realising that society had grown too complex to be understood in terms of traditional Marxist or "capitalist" thinking.

In the Soviet Union, for obvious reasons, there was no similar development in critical thought. There was no proper outlet for social criticism and when it found its way to be expressed through such phenomena as *stiliazhestvo* [3] or Thaw literature (Ehrenburg, Dudintsev, Jashchin, Solzhenitsyn etc.) it was always particular and limited in scope. While American thinkers were trying to define the repressive aspects of the kind of new society, they found themselves in, the Russians were, very cautiously, trying to win some liberties which Americans took for granted. Only in the late 60s did Soviet dissidence, purified in the battle with the authorities, widen its horizon to become concerned with fundamental patterns of social development. In his "Thoughts on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom" (1968), for instance, we find Andrei Sakharov discussing not only nuclear war, poverty, pollution, racism, nationalism and totalitarianism (Stalinism), but also Mass Culture in both the USA and the USSR, which he sees as a threat to intellectual freedom.[4]

The difference between American and Soviet social criticism is clearly reflected in the Beat Generation and the New Wave. Generally, the Beats did not have to concern themselves with such fundamental matters as personal freedom or the right to publish (although they did have some problems with censorship), whereas the New Wave was forced to deal with problems which now seem ridiculous. As Andrei Bitov puts it:

> These young people had been brought up under Stalin and, as a result, were not critical. They understood things simply. Despite the drawbacks and the horrors, a rather pure structure took form, for people are purer, more naive, and ignorant under a totalitarian regime. From 1956 on a spirit of unprecedented though relative freedom was presented to them. Logically, they faced the situation with inner purity, inexperience, and artificially created infantilism!(See p.45)

The naivity or infantilism of the New Wave does not mean, however, that the essential features of the movement were different from those of the Beat Generation who, by the way, were also accused of being naive or "know-nothing Bohemians." It only means that the forms in which these features expressed themselves were different.

We believe that the essential common features of the two movements must, at first, be found on a higher level of abstraction. Both movements in the begining considered themselves to be apolitical. They were not at all interested in the institutions, the culture or the politics of society. Being parts of a subculture they wanted something completely different than society. Their interests were in another dimension which they did not find in the established official world. In the words of Dean and Sal, the heroes of On the Road:

> "Whee, Sal, we gotta go and never stop going till we get there"
> "Where are we going, man?"
> "I don't know but we gotta go".[5]

A similar urge to go somewhere, not knowing exactly where and why, is found in the works of Andrei Bitov, Anatolii Gladilin and Vassily Aksyonov, for instance in Aksyonov's A Ticket to the Stars:

> Dimka: "So shall we take off or not?"
> Alik: "Where'll we go?"
> Dimka: "Where? Well, what about the Baltic coast, somewhere around Riga for a start?"
> Yurka: "But I don't see how we can make it."
> Dimka: "Why, we'll just go and that's all there is to it."[6]

The urge to go somewhere else, away from the reality of everyday life, is, on the metaphorical level, a journey into another dimension, or, as Gladilin calls it, "into other spheres"(see interview, p. 80). Esentially these other spheres, or this "something else", are what Marcuse has named the "lacking dimension" of the one-dimensional society; and the search for this lacking dimension is a common feature of the Beat Generation and the New Wave. To understand the concept of the two dimensions we must take a brief look at Marcuse's general theory.

Marcuse describes modern society as a "historical freak between organized capitalism and socialism, servitude and freedom, totalitarianism and happiness";[7] it is a society that through technological progress has made freedom possible and rendered repression and domination superfluous, but which has, paradoxically, also made these possibilities impossible to recognize because the masses are satisfied, the proletariat gone and dissent absorbed. It is thus a highly sophisticated, but static and conformist society which has made change and liberation impossible. Like Erich Fromm, Marcuse sees the Enemy as a fictional device in the hands of the Establishment:

> The Enemy is the common denominator of all doing and undoing. And the enemy is not identical with actual communism or actual capitalism - he is, in both cases, the real spectre of liberation.[8]

Marcuse repeatedly points out that one-dimensionality (lacking the second, critical dimension of human activity) is a common feature of American and Soviet societies; that in both societies non-conformism is absorbed, and that the establishment in the USA and the Soviet Union even have common interests: " In a sense, this is indeed the community of interests of the *haves* against the *have nots*, of the Old against the New."[9] And in the struggle against the *have nots*, the *haves* have developed forms of control that are so sophisticated that the result is a society without opposition. These new forms make liberty itself into a powerful instrument of domination; the needs which demand liberation are effectively suffocated, while society "sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society."[10]

Marcuse shows how this mechanism works in the areas of politics, fine arts, philosophy etc. We shall attempt to describe the function of this process in the area of culture by citing some of Marcuse's examples of how the oppositional and transcending elements in the "higher culture" (which used to represent the second dimension) are liquidated or "desublimated". He argues that the one-dimensional culture is a result of:

> the flattening out of the antagonism in society between culture and social reality through the abolition of the oppositional, alien, and transcendent elements in the higher culture by virtue of which it constituted another dimension of reality. This liquidation of two-dimensional culture takes place not through the denial and rejection of the "cultural values", but through their wholesale incorporation into the established order, through their reproduction and display on a massive scale.[11]

Thus, higher culture becomes part of the material culture, and looses the greater part of its truth. The official bourgeois order and the entire sphere of business and industry used to be opposed and denied by the higher culture which in literature was represented by " such disruptive characters as the artist, the prostitute, the adulteress, the great criminal and outcast, the warrior, the rebel-poet, the devil, the fool."[12] These characters still exist in literature, but, according to Marcuse, they have been transformed so that "they are no longer images of another way of life but rather freaks or types of the same life, serving as an affirmation rather than negation of the established order."[13]

Marcuse takes up the phenomenon of artistic alienation which used to have a subversive and liberating function. But literature of alienation has also been transformed through massive reproduction and mass-consumption so that it has lost its subversive force, its destructive content, its truth. The estrangement effect is seen by Marcuse as literature's own attempt to rescue the "rationality of the negative". But to express transcendence within the one world, the poetic language depends on the transcendent elements of ordinary language: "However, the total mobilization of all media for the defence of the established reality has coordinated the means of expression to the point where communication of transcending content becomes technically impossible."[14] In this way all transcending elements of the other dimension have been desublimated and incorporated into the daily reality of society unifying the opposition between metaphysics and rationality, creating a popular culture.

A similar process of "repressive desublimation" has taken place in the realm of Eros. With a more liberated sexuality (partly as a result of a social development which has given people more free time) it follows that sex has become a product for sale, the range of the socially permissible satisfaction is enlarged, but at the same time the "Pleasure Principle" is reduced. A happy consciousness prevails, facilitating acceptance of the misdeeds of society. It is excactly this happy consciousness that Marcuse sees as the greatest danger of the one-dimensional society, because it:

> frees the instinctual drives from much of the unhappiness and discontent that elucidate the repressive power of the established universe of satisfaction .... becoming the instinctual reservoir for a new fascist way of life and death.[15]

Marcuse's pessimism with regard to the effect of dissent and non-conformism includes both the USA and the Soviet Union. He specifically mentions that the Beatnik as character is no longer an image of another way of life but an affirmation of the established order.[16] However, after having witnessed the student revolt and the creation of what he calls "The New Sensibility" he gives a more optimistic picture. In An Essay on Liberation (1969) he links the lost dimension with the emergence of a "New Sensibility" which expresses the "ascent of the life instinct over aggressiveness and guilt." He sees a new "Reality Principle," under which "a new sensibility and a desublimated scientific world combine in the creation of an aesthetic ethos."[17]

The new sensibility is a struggle for new ways and forms of life; it rejects the entire establishment, its morality and culture, and it affirms "a universe where the sensuous, the playful, the calm, and the beautiful become forms of existence and thereby the Form of society itself."[18] Again Marcuse stresses the parallel development in the West and the East:

> ... the hatred of the young bursts into laughter and song, mixing the barricade and the dance floor, love, play and heroism. And the young also attack the esprit de serieux in the socialist camp: miniskirts against the apparatchiks, rock'n' roll against Soviet Realism.[19]

Allen Ginsberg is clearly talking about the same thing when suggesting how to deal with the Soviet system:

> I think the only way to deal with the Russians is the way we dealt with the Americans, and which would be to introduce lots of rock'n'roll, junk, LSD, grass, psychedelics, meditation, the whole cultural revolution. This is the psychological individuation process working from within. (See p. 12)

Vassily Aksyonov is in line with this when he discusses the nature of jazz, which he considers a very important part of the New Wave, as a "carnivalistic protest against the caste system." (See interview)

At the time when the two movements emerged they did not know Marcuse, but at least the Beats later realized that they could identify with many of his ideas (see the interview with McClure). The "one-dimensional society" is a concept which clearly reflects the image of society against which the Beat Generation and the New Wave reacted. And the "lacking dimension" is a concept which explains much of what the movements stood for, although Marcuse preaches an additional political activity -- alien to the original movements -- if the revolt is to have any result. Marcuse even discusses the essentials of a new art expressing the new international consciousness which, we think, the two movements were part of:

> Non-objective, abstract painting and sculpture, stream of consciousness and formalist literature, twelve-tone composition, blues and jazz: these are not merely new models of perception reorienting and intensifying the old ones; they rather dissolve the very structure of perception in order to make room - for what? The new object of art is not yet "given," but the familiar object has become impossible, false. From illusion, imitation, harmony to reality - but the reality is not yet "given;" it is not the one which is the object of "realism." Reality has to be discovered and projected. The senses must learn not to see things anymore in the medium of law and order which has formed them; the bad functionalism which organizes our sensibility must be smashed.[20]

However, Marcuse's theory is categorical, either or, and basically pessimistic: if the revolt is not supported by political activity it will be in vain. The theory explains the emergence of a "new sensibility" only in (post) Marxist terms as the result of specific historical circumstances; it does not explain it in a broader perspective. The "second dimension" shares many features with subcultures in general and the Beat Generation and the New Wave in particular.

B.M. Berger's definition of subculture is not limited to the standard sociological definition which combines class, ethnic, religious factors and territorial and institutional conditions. He conceives of 'subcultures as: "patterns of norms with distinctive competences and limitations, norms which enable their adherents to cope with certain exigencies, to undertake certain activities, to move in certain directions, to create certain personal and collective styles."[21] This definition of subculture enables him -- and us -- to include in it the Bohemian subcultures, to which the Beat writers and the New Wave belonged, and the urban youth subcultures (hipster / stiliaga) with whom they identified.

On a more abstract level, we see the two movements as parts of the subculture which is always present in society; it is not always visible, but from time to time, when tensions get too high, it bursts out in an explosion. Such a subcultural outburst is a recurring, cyclic phenomenon which can be explained in terms of the carnival.

The "carnival theory" of Mikhail Bakhtin explains both the nature of subculture -- be it on a rather abstract level -- and its basic forms of expression. Marcuse relies solely on the avant-garde and does not link this to the fundamental, ever existing, non-conformistic art of folklore. As Vassily Aksyonov, who like other members of the New Wave is influenced by Bakhtin, points out:

> the avant-garde is connected with folklore. What is considered to be a basic, realistic trend -- it's just a thing without roots, a thing out of the practical nineteenth century cheap, superficial positivism. Avant-garde arose as a reaction against that positivism of the sixties of the last century --it holds out its hands to the genuine roots of human art.(See interview, p. 31-32)

By viewing the Beat Generation and the New Wave as carnivalistic outbursts of a subculture and their art as "folkloristic avant-garde" we can establish a link to Bakhtin's cyclic concept of subculture.

In his book on Rabelais, Bakhtin traces the roots of the figurative language used by Rabelais back to the Medieval subculture which was most clearly expressed in the carnival. In our context it is his analysis of the carnival as such that is most important.

The basis of the carnival was laughter and it was this which distinguished it principally from official religious and state ceremonies in Medieval Europe.[22] The carnival created an opposition to the official world, a "twin world", in which the official world was forsworn and parodied. It was basically an expression of subcultural protest against the laws, rules and dogmas of the established hierarchy, but because it was based on laughter and playing it was not a total rejection of society; it both rejected and affirmed, destroyed and rebuilt. The closest art form to the carnival was the theatre, but the carnival was not pure art, it straddled the borderline between art and reality -- it was, so to speak, life itself formed by play. Life was temporarily exposed to the freedom of the carnival. Laws and dogmas were set aside and everything was permitted. The temporary ideal, the abolition of the hierarchic system -- fool as king, king as fool -- created a new set of social conventions among people, by which each individual could feel free, but at the same time feel part of an imperfect whole. Moreover, the carnival created new forms of expression, a new language of carnival imagery and symbols with a material corporeal basis, and a specific aesthetic conception which Bakhtin calls "Grotesque Realism."[23]

The most important feature of carnivalistic imagery is downgrading. The body and its functions are used to transform (downgrade) the most spiritual and ideal and sacred of the official world downwards (the fool having sex with the queen, or the clown urinating on an icon). The body and its functions take on a cosmic and all-folk character; it is not the individual but the entire people which is described by means of corporeal metaphoric hyperboles. The exaggeration of the hyperbole is positive and affirmative, joyful and festive. Downgrading is, thus, an ambivalent process -- destruction unto birth: fertilization, pregnancy, urination etc. dig "the grave for the body's rebirth", it rejects and affirms at the same time. Downgrading manifests itself in the sign language of the hipsters and the *stiliagi* (See 3.1.)

The preoccupation with the body and sex, characteristic of Bakhtin's "body language", suggests a close connection to the realm of instincts and the subconscious. Both Marcuse and Bakhtin are clearly influenced by modern psychology. Bakhtin has written a book on Freud, and Marcuse and the Frankfurter school openly express their close relationship to Wilhelm Reich; and, incidentally, the Beats were much influenced by Reich, who later also became widely read by the Russians (see the Voznesensky interview). Obviously, the theories of Reich were appealing to a generation that had lost its faith in both religion and politics -- especially when Reich promised a way to a "unity of culture and nature, work and love, morality and sexuality". And Reich even attempts to explain the nature of subculture:

> ... the cultural revolutions of our century are determined by the struggle of humanity for a reestablishment of the natural laws of love life ..... it reveals itself in the diverse forms of mystical longing, cosmic phantasies,'oceanic' feelings, religious ecstacies, ...it is unconscious, full of neurotic conflicts and anxiety and is apt to take the forms which characterize the secondary, perverse drives. A humanity which has been forced for millennia to act contrary to its fundamental biological laws and has, therefore, acquired a second nature which is actually a counter-nature.[24]

Reich is of course an extremist, but his ideas indeed touch upon essential aspects of the nature of the subculture in general and of the two movements in particular, and they are closely related to some of the concepts shared by Marcuse and Bakhtin. It would, for instance, be possible to see the subculture ("lost dimension") in psychological terms as the subconscious of society, and the carnival as a sudden reflection of it, a temporary relief from subconscious tensions.

The points to be made from the above discussion as related to our analysis of the Beat Generation and the New Wave are:

1. The two movements represent a subculture, opposed to and created by the one-dimensional society.

2. Their art expresses a carnivalistic outburst of the subculture.

3. This art exhibits some basic features, related to a fundamental rejection of/ escape from-the official world/ establishment: downgrading is a basic principle; the imagery used reflects a close relationship with the subconscious and derives from "folklore" and the avant-garde.

In the light of this we shall in the following explore the histories of the two movements as reflections of the subculture; we shall outline the establishment reaction to the movements, leading to the outline of 'thematic spheres' to be analysed.

2.3. THE HISTORY OF THE TWO MOVEMENTS.

2.3.1. The History of the Beat Generation.

The Beat Generation is a much publicized and researched phenomenon and, unfortunately, one some times gets the impression that there are as many Beat Generations as there are commentators. To some, it is the non-conformist section of the post-War generation of Americans, to others, it is a threat to civilization, while to still others, it is a literary movement, a group of writers who have something in common. Our purpose here is to identify those writers and that something, bearing in mind that when a literary phenomenon is confused with a socio-political one, then it is necessarily due to some special characteristics of that phenomenon: breaking down fences is definitely part of the beat project.

Among the literary commentators, there is no agreement as to which writers are "Beat," and, to complicate things further, most of the writers themselves have at some point rejected the term. Even Allen Ginsberg, the arch-beat, who is often referred to by the others for a definition of beatness, is not unequivocal: "Sometimes I don't consider myself a Beat poet and sometimes I do. When somebody attacks the Beat Generation I do" (see interview). However, as most commentators do include Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, we will assume that, from the beginning, where these two were, there was the Beat Generation.

2.3.1.1. The Beginning: New York -- The Forties were a time when society seemed to have much to offer those who would follow the paths to success it laid out. Both Kerouac and Ginsberg had set out to do so, coming to New York to study at Columbia University, but by the time they met in 1944 Kerouac had dropped out and Ginsberg was about to be expelled for disciplinary reasons; both were in the process of finding out what they did not want in life.

With such friends as John Clellon Holmes, who chronicled this experience in his first novel Go (1952), they spent night after night discussing what it was that made them different. During one such session in 1948, recorded by Holmes, Kerouac first came upon the term Beat Generation:

> "It's a sort of furtiveness," he said. "Like we were a generation of furtives. You know, with an inner knowledge there's no use flaunting on that level, the level of the 'public', a kind of beatness -- I mean, being right down to it, to

> ourselves, because we all really know where we are -- and a weariness with all the forms, all the conventions of the world... It's something like that. So I guess you might say we are a beat generation."[1]

The discussion among friends, sometimes in the form of psychoanalytical sessions with William S. Burroughs in the role of the analyst, were backed by field studies in the New York underground, where Burroughs acted as an expert guide. Here they discovered a complete anti-world inhabited by hipsters, bohemians, criminals, the drug community, the down and out. Here the language was hip, the music was bebop and both reflected a lifestyle that was radically different from that of mainstream America: life was lived out spontaneously, on impulse, for the moment, in search of the next "kick;" nobody spent time planning a future which might never arrive.

When asked who founded the Beat Generation, Allen Ginsberg gives the credit to Burroughs and to Herbert Huncke, the hipster and drug-dealer: "I would say that the founder was Herbert Huncke, speaking literally, - he introduced the whole terminology and a lot of the attitudes" (see interview). The contact with this environment produced a background against which the beats could project what J.C. Holmes called their feeling of "expectation without reasonable hope, of recklessness without motivation, of uniqueness seeking an image."[2]

In some segments of society, the war had caused an uncertainty about the direction of modern civilization, about the idea of progress. With the discoveries that went along with the war, epitomised in the atom bomb, the past and the political and other traditional values of society seemed to grow irrelevant, and the future had become uncertain. What remained to the individual was the freedom and integrity of the moment. This was the "inner knowledge," which the Beats felt they shared with the 'disengaged' hipster. The hipster, living his life without illusions, seemed to Kerouac and his friends less mad than those who gave themselves up to be processed by the machinery of society while stifling the needs of their souls. Thus, the Beats were gradually deciphering the message they felt they had to deliver to humanity as one of spiritual liberation, or 'beatitude' through 'beatness'.

In 1948, during a period of depression and loneliness, Ginsberg had his first vision. Through the window of his East Harlem apartment, he heard a voice which he knew to be Blake's , reciting "Ah Sunflower" and "The Sick Rose" to him. He felt that he had reached the end of his own strength and that Blake's voice was comforting him, coming from a spiritual realm beyond the material world, beyond the suffering of the individual, and telling him that while all human life is suffering, redemption is possible. The experience helped him determine the direction his own poetry must take following the tradition of visionary poetry.

Another seminal event had taken place in 1946, when Kerouac and Ginsberg first met Neal Cassady, a man their own age but with a considerably wider experience of life. Cassady had grown up among skid row bums in Denver, he had been an altar boy and a male prostitute and a car thief, for which he had spent time in several reformatories,he had hitch-hiked over most of the country and now he arrived in New York, wanting to become a writer. Although his memoir fragment "The First Third" is not without interest, he never amounted to anything as a writer; instead, he became a Beat muse. Cassady's vitality and frantic life-style directly affected Kerouac and Ginsberg as they became involved with him as friends and, more importantly, he became a kind of heroic example to them, the living proof "a man could survive the loss of everything but faith in himself."[3] Not only was he to be the hero of several novels by Kerouac, his use of the language in his rambling talks and letters deeply influenced the beat mode of writing which Kerouac developed for On the Road.

By 1950 the group also included Gregory Corso, "a tough young kid from the lower East Side," who had read books while in prison and started to write poetry himself.

Although the literary breakthrough came later, it was during the forties in New York that the Beat Generation took shape. Their position as orphans, outsiders in most senses of the word gave the Beats an enhanced sense of their own importance and made them draw closer together; friendship was probably the main reason for the strong cohesion of the group -- according to Ginsberg "there never really was a Beat Generation, there was a group of friends"(see interview). The idea of their "brotherhood" was part of the beats' myth about themselves, which was to inform the writing of each of them and which was accompanied by a specific vocabulary. The Beats were, as Dorothy Van Ghent has pointed out, mythmakers along "authentic, archaic lines."[4] Their mythic quest was of a religious nature, for a transcendence which could be glimpsed along the road of life as IT, and they were chosen to take it on because they were "Beat," because their minds were open and deconditioned or "naked," because they had the innocense and superior consciousness of "angels," all of which made them ready to receive enlightenment. To take on this quest, to live according to the drift of the naked mind, moment by moment, constantly on the move, seeking far-out experiences, often involving drugs, was madness in the eyes of the world; from the beat point of view it was "holy madness."

1.3.1.2. The Breakthrough. San Francisco -- When Ginsberg followed Kerouac to San Francisco in 1954 he had published only three poems; but he had sent his two collections The Gates of Wrath (1972) and Empty Mirror (1961) to William Carlos Williams and carried letters of introduction from this poet to colleagues on the West Coast.

San Francisco has always been a city of many poets, and during the post-war period particularly it was the centre for innovative writing in America. Kenneth Rexroth's literary salon was a forum for beginning poets. George Leite's Circle magazine published local and international experimental writing. Robert Duncan started the tradition of public poetry readings which became one of the main distinctive features of literary life in San Francisco and which created an extraordinarily perceptive and responsive new audience. Duncan, moreover, introduced the Black Mountain school of poetry into the San Francisco scene. The Poetry Center at San Francisco State College, organized by Ruth Witt-Diamant, brought many famous poets to the city. Lawrence Ferlinghetti arrived in San Francisco in 1953 and set up his all paperback bookstore City Lights. In 1955 he started the City Lights Pocket Poets series by publishing his own Pictures of the Gone World. This volume as well as his subsequent collection A Coney Island of the Mind (1958) are strikingly "Beat" in tone and attitude. Ferlinghetti as publisher, fellow-poet and friend became the link between the beats and the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance and between the Americans and kindred foreign writers.

What Ginsberg found in San Francisco, then, was an atmosphere of interaction between an enthusiastic audience on the one hand and a community of poets, some older, some of his own age, but none of them foreign to the idea of rebellion, on the other. Between his first two collections of poetry Ginsberg, acting on Williams' advice, had relaxed his highly orthodox style and was moving towards Kerouac's ideals of spontaneous writing or "blowing."

It was in continuation of this process that he was able, in 1956, to produce his "Howl," the most famous poem of the Beat Generation. Ginsberg felt that the ripening of his own talent corresponded with a general ripening of the times: the world seemed ready for a poetic revolution. To help make it happen he organised the now legendary poetry reading at the Six Gallery in December 1956:

> Six poets at the Six Gallery. Kenneth Rexroth, M.C. . Remarkable collection of

> angels all gathered at once in the same spot. Wine, music, dancing, girls, serious poetry, free satori. Small collection for wine and postcards. Charming event.[5]

That night Ginsberg gave his first public reading of "Howl." Michael McClure, one of the five other poets on stage later celebrated the event in Scratching the Beat Surface (1982):

> In all our memories no one had been so outspoken in poetry before - we had gone beyond a point of no return - and we were ready for it, for at point of no return. None of us wanted to go back to the gray, chill, militaristic silence, to the intellective void - to the land without poetry - to the spiritual drabness. We wanted to make it new and we wanted to invent it and the process of it as we went into it. We wanted voice and we wanted vision.[6]

The evening was a personal triumph for Ginsberg, and it gave him, as he later told Jane Kramer, "the sense of 'at last a community'."[7]

Kerouac, who was also present, passing jugs of wine among the audience and shouting "go! go!", fictionalized the event in The Dharma Bums (1958), calling it the "birth of the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance."[8] In retrospect the Six Gallery Reading becomes symbolic of the merger or rather the joining of forces of the Beat Generation with what T. Parkinson has called "the second wave of the Bay area awakening,"[9] represented by Michael McClure, Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen and Lew Welch who read their poetry along with Ginsberg.

To McClure, whose poetry of the fifties was to be published in Passage (1956), Hymns to St. Geryon and Other Poems (1959) and A Fist-Full (1956-1957) (1974), the Beat Generation was an eruption of the new kind of energy which he himself was searching for, the "biological consciousness" necessary to make experience complete and original. Kerouac, he says,

> had one of the finest sensoriums, he had the finest use of eyes, ears, nose that I know of, so in that sense he is an example for all of us. Although we all see differently, we learn to see as Kerouac sees; and our consciousness and our biological awarenesss is broadened. In other words, he is not writing from the "universe of discourse", he is not writing from the ideas which already exist, he is writing from his own perception. And that gives emphasis and energy to a biological consciousness. (see interview, p.68)

By the time he met the Beats, Gary Snyder's rejection of the values of modern technocratic society was perhaps even more radical than Ginsberg's. But rather than living in "expectation without reasonable hope" he embodied, in his own life, an alternative set of values which were sustained by his intimate relationship with nature, his thorough studies in anthropology and buddhism and his roots in Western anarchism.

The Beats were impressed and influenced by Snyder's wholeness of character and by his buddhist scholarship -- both Kerouac and Ginsberg, independently of each other, developed an interest in Asian literatures and religions. In the image of Japhy Ryder, Snyder is the object of Kerouac's affection and admiration in The Dharma Bums. During the years when public interest in the Beat Generation was at its highest, Snyder was away in Japan; and his poetry from the fifties has nothing in common with Beat poetry per se on the level of style. Yet, on the level of ideology, including his views on the role of the poet in the community, he was in line with the Beat Generation. He says:

> The aesthetic phenomenon identified with beat is poetry of the sort Gregory Corso and Allen Ginsberg write which is very expansive and very Whitmanesque. My poetry is not of that sort and I didn't contribute anything to that poetry, only to the social and political aspects of the phenomenon.[9]

When Snyder's first two books Riprap (1959) and Myths and Texts (1960) eventually were published, they were received within the context of the by then expanded phenomenon of the Beat Generation.

If, at the Six Gallery, Kerouac was able to rejoice wholeheartedly in Ginsberg's success and to share in the sense of "at last a community", it was because there finally seemed to be a turn for the better in his own career. Back in 1950 he had published his first novel The Town and the City, an attempt, in traditional form, to reconcile the contradictions between his childhood in Lowell and life with his new friends in New York city. During the following seven years, he was to write twelve more books while publishing none, but in 1955 On the Road had been accepted by Viking Press. Kerouac had begun this novel, his account of the people who "burn, burn, burn like fabulous roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars,"[10] in 1949, and then rewritten it on one roll of paper in three weeks in 1951 after developing his theory of "spontaneous composition." He had been jealous and bitter when it was preceded by Holmes' Go as the first Beat novel, but when it finally appeared in 1957 the response was overwhelming. Kerouac became famous and during the next few years he was able to publish most of what he had written. The Subterraneans (written in 1953) and The Dharma Bums (1957) appeared in 1958, Dr. Sax.(1952) and Maggie Cassidy (1953) in 1959. The long experimental novel Visions of Cody from 1952 was published only in 1972. Mexico City Blues (1959), a volume of poetry, and the Book of Dreams (1961) were included in Ferlinghetti's Pocket Poets Series, as were Ginsberg's Howl & Other Poems (1956) and Kaddish & Other Poems (1961) and Gregory Corso's Gasoline (1958).

Corso had made his way to San Francisco in 1956 after spending two years studying at Harvard (without formally registering). His first collection of poetry The Vestal Lady on Brattle and Other Poems had been published privately in 1955. Between 1957 and 1961 Corso spent most of his time in Europe where he wrote his novel The American Express (1961). His subsequent collections of poetry The Happy Birthday of Death and Long Live Man appeared in 1960 and 1962.

When the Beat Generation exploded in San Francisco, Burroughs was living in Tangiers, where his drug habit had taken him in 1953. That year had also seen the publication of his novel Junkie by Ace Books thanks to Ginsberg's efforts as a literary agent. In Tangiers, Burroughs was at work on what was to be his most acclaimed book, The Naked Lunch. The novel is an inside record of a morphine addiction, but it also identifies addiction as a universal structure in human relationships, using the theme as a basis for social satire. In 1957, after treatments in London, Burroughs was able to control his addiction and, with the help of friends, to edit his novel. Kerouac, visiting in Tangiers, typed up the manuscript and named the book, just as he had named Ginsberg's "Howl."

The Naked Lunch was published in 1959 in Paris and in 1962 in the USA where it was twice tried for obscenity and cleared. Between 1959 and 1964, Burroughs lived in Paris and wrote his trilogy The Soft Machine (Paris, 1961/ New York, 1966), The Ticket That Exploded (1962/1967) and Nova Express (New York, 1964) in which he used notes accumulated during the fifties and developed his "cut-up" method. A volume of correspondance between Burroughs and Ginsberg was published by City Lights as The Yage Letters in 1963.

2.3.1.3. The Years of Fame and Notoriety and After -- In 1957 Ferlinghetti, as the publisher of Ginsberg's "Howl", was tried for obscenity. The trial ended in acquittal as the judge found the poem to be "not without the slightest social significance", and what the trial in fact accomplished was to attract nationwide attention to "Howl" and its author. The same year Kerouac's On the Road was finally published and became a bestseller. Suddenly the Beat Generation "seemed to be everything - and the only thing - that was happening"[11] and the press seized on it readily.

But the media, as Holmes put it, were ready for "happenings," not for "a condition of expectation in the soul"[12] and the Beat Generation they portrayed was perhaps more their own creation than that of Kerouac, Ginsberg and co. They ignored the Beats' insistance that beat meant beatific, that theirs was a religious movement, and concentrated instead on the sensational peculiarities of their life-style and appearance. In "The Origins of the Beat Generation" (1959) Kerouac relates how a particular photograph of him in which his hair was uncombed became a favorite with the press and how every publication which carried it (except the New York Times) erased from the photograph the crucifix he was wearing.

To the general public, the Beat thing seemed to be, as Kerouac wrote, "a simple change in fashion and manners,"[13] and when San Francisco columnist Herb Caen invented the corresponding diminutive 'beatnik' (in 1959) to designate the young followers of fashion, this term was largely identified with the original 'beat'. The opposition 'squares' vs. 'beatniks' fell into place in the public consciousness; the two were opposites and yet, like mirror images, they defined each other and posed no real threat to each other.

Though to some extent the media succeeded in concealing the real significance of the Beat Generation through the familiar process of labelling and redefining, the Beat call for spiritual liberation did have an impact within the context of literature as well as in a wider, social sense (after all, the very vehemence of media reaction is a measure of this).

Defining the Beat Generation from the point of view of literary history, John Clellon Holmes writes:

> I take this movement to embrace all those writers who rejected the formalism, conservatism and "classicism", that Eliot's influence grafted on American writing; who went back to essential sources - in our national experience and in our earlier literature - to be renewed.[14]

As a definition, this statement is, of course, at the same time too narrow and too wide. It is true, however, that the Beats were attracted to writers - American and foreign

- not fashionable or even respectable at the time - Melville, Whitman, Pound, Crane, Williams, Rimbaud, and Blake should be mentioned already at this point. It is also true that the impact of the Beats is particularly conspicuous in the field of poetry which was then dominated by the esoteric ideal of T.S. Eliot. Poetry was written in order to be deciphered, and this task was, to a greater and greater extent, being monopolized by 'experts' presided over by the New Critics in New York and the big universities. The Beats, like the visionary poets of the past, believed that poetry could and should be of "essential use" as Charles Olson put it in his influential 1950 essay on "Projective verse". To the followers of T.S. Eliot, the artistic value of poetry was a function of the degree to which the poet was able to transcend private experience and to refine the direct expression of emotion out of his work. To the Beats, on the other hand, poetry was self-exposure; its degree of honesty was the measure of its value and in order to ensure honesty poetry must retain the form in which it poured forth spontaneously from the inner source. The so-called "war of anthologies" illustrates the clash between the two opposing trends: within three years there appeared two mutually exclusive anthologies of poetry, in 1957 -- The New Poets of England and America (edited by D. Hall and others), and in 1960 -- The New American Poetry (edited by D. Allen), which included most of the poets who have been associated with the Beat Generation. B. Cook, comparing the two anthologies in 1971, writes: "There can be no question who won the battle. Take a turn through The New Poets and and you will be surprised at the number of American poets in it who have dropped out of sight completely."[15]

There is little doubt, then, that the Beat Generation changed the direction of American poetry, towards greater openness and stylistic freedom. However, in Stepanchev's 1965 survey American Poetry Since 1945 one finds a rather different view:

> The popular poetry of the 1950s and 1960s is not the sentimental, rhymed verse of the newspaper poets but the uninhibited, open-form poetry of the "beat generation", which came into prominence in the middle 1950s and had a tremendous vogue for about five years.[16]

Stepanchev seems to assume that popularity, when it comes to poetry, is degrading, a symptom of shallowness. But the fact that the Beat Generation became a popular literary movement can also be seen to prove the Beats' feeling, that, at this moment in history, literature, art, as the expression of the soul, had become a more essential need than ever, as an alternative to the political and scientific ways of looking at the world. Producing a new kind of literature, the Beats also seemed to be discovering a new audience -- a Beat generation of young Americans.

If the Beats were "disengaged" from society, they were extremely engaged in the relationship with their readers and audiences to whom they were not just writers, but points of spiritual orientation. They gathered around them those who perceived "that the problem of modern life is essentially a spiritual problem."[17]

John Tytell, defining the Beat Generation in time, writes that it "began near the end of the Second World War, found its voice during the fifties, and became especially influential during the sixties."[18] This is accurate from the literary point of view, but the "mutation of consciousness" (M. McClure's term) which started with the Beats is still in progress.

By the late sixties, the dominant subculture in the USA was hippie rather than Beat, but it is of course significant, that at one of the original hippie manifestations, The Great Human Be-In in San Francisco 1967, both Ginsberg, Snyder, McClure and Ferlinghetti were guests of honor. The hippie culture, the rock culture, perhaps especially Bob Dylan's contribution to this, and many of today's Grassroot movements all have roots which reach back to the Beat Generation. To McClure, the full significance of what started then has yet to be revealed, he feels that the Beat Generation is "more important now, and it will be more important in the future" (see interview) and that the interest in the Beat Generation is far from fading, particularly abroad: "now people want us to come and read in Germany, Holland, or Italy; and they want to get their hands on the things that we had in the fifties and the sixties" (see interview, p. 69).

As Cook points out "surely no decade ever belonged to any nation in quite the way that the 1950s belonged to America."[19] After the war the USA had emerged as the economically and politically strongest nation in the world; it had earned the awe and gratitude of Europe and nothing stood in the way of its establishing cultural domination as well which it did, overwhelmingly, through advertising, movies, and later television.

The force with which 'official' American culture made itself felt, also lent significance to that other Voice of America, the subculture. Beatniks and hippies cropped up everywhere, and the Beat writers, particularly Ginsberg and Kerouac, became as well-known and popular abroad as perhaps only Hemingway among American writers had ever been. Writers were influenced by the Beats not only in the things they wrote about, but also in the way they sounded: original America n speech rhythms transmitted themselves to their writing -- and through that probably even to the way young people spoke -- all over Europe.

2.3.2. The History of the New Wave.

The phenomenon of the New Wave is important enough to have received attention from all critics writing about post-war Russian literature (see **2.4.**). But the term "New Wave" along with many other terms, which seem interchangeable, has been used variously to designate either the poetry of the late fifties-early sixties (Poetry Revival,Young Poets, New Poets, New Wave), or the prose of the early sixties (Young prose, Fourth Generation, New Wave) or specific groupings within that prose based on diverse criteria (Short Prose, Young Prose, Youth Prose, The Youth pleiad, City Prose, Confessional prose, New Wave). No attempt has been made to deal with the phenomena hiding under these labels as one movement, although many common features have been pointed out and although the poets and writers in question clearly felt, in the words of Andrei Bitov, that they were "one brigade" (see p. 44). We adhere to the term "New Wave" despite its unfortunate connotations of French cinema and punk rock, because it is the most comprehensive and because we found that the writers we interviewed could identify with it.

Because the New Wave has not been described as one movement, no attempt has likewise been made to define the distinctive features of New Wave literature as opposed to Thaw literature proper. Some commentators, however, such as D. Brown and H. Hertel,[20] have come to the conclusion which is the starting point of this dissertation: That in order to be fully understood, the work of these poets and writers must be put in an international context.

2.3.2.1. The Thaw and the New Wave -- Most scholars hold that the Thaw began after Stalin's death in 1953[21] -- although certain important developments, associated with the journal Novyi mir had taken place already in 1952 -- and that, significantly, it began not in literature, but in criticism, with articles by I. Erenburg and V. Pomerantsev.[22] As for the end of the Thaw, it has, as P.U. Møller points out, been proclaimed almost yearly since 1954 when Tvardovskii lost his editorial position in New World for publishing Pomerantsev's article.[23] During the same year, however, Erenburg published his novel Thaw which lent its name to the whole period, and the Second Writers' Congress, while emitting cautious signal, nevertheless concentrated on the aesthetic rather than the ideological aspect of literature. Thaw set in again following

Khrushchev's secret speech to the twentieth Party Congress in 1956, and that year saw the publication of Dudintsev's Not by Bread Alone and the two volume anthology Literary Moscow. However, the Hungarian rebellion later the same year caused the temperature to drop sharply.

In 1957 the Moscow Writers' Union was incorporated ~~into the larger~~ Writers' Union of the RSFSR whereby the rebellious Moscow writers were 'neutralized' by their more loyal, provincial colleagues. In 1958, Pasternak was excluded from the Writers' Union after being awarded the Nobel Prize for his Dr. Zhivago. Then in 1959, Khrushchev delivered one of his characteristically ambiguous messages to the Third Writers' Congress, telling the writers to solve their own problems rather than bothering the Party with such trifles. The Twenty-Second Congress of the CPSU in 1961 encouraged Khrushchev to continue the process of destalinization, and 1962 became another definite Thaw year, when Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich was published with the personal blessing of the First Secretary. But if Khrushchev could identify with Ivan Denisovich, he was horrified by what he saw when he visited an exhibition of modern art at the Manezh in December 1962. His parting words to the artists present were not approving: "Judging by these experiments, I am entitled to think that you are pederasts, and for that you can get 10 years."[24] War was now declared on abstract art, and during the spring of 1963 the campaign shifted its focus to literature, culminating in the March 8 meeting between creative artists and party leaders, where Khrushchev, having decided that literature was after all a matter for the Party, delivered a sweeping address :"Lofty Ideology and Artistic Craftmanship Are the Great Forces of Soviet Literature and Art."[25]

In so far as it was the translation into cultural policy of the periodic liberalization efforts and the general political uncertainty of the Khrushchev era, the Thaw ended with Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964. That year the tradition of legal proceedings was initiated with the trial of Brodsky, and for those who were still hoping for another change in weather, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 became the moment of truth. But the literary consequences of the Thaw are not so easily surveyed.

What we see as Thaw literature proper can be defined as a brand of critical realism, the trend that came to be identified with the journal Novyi mir. In unobtrusive, non-experimental form it dealt with the 'mistakes' of the recent past and offered non-systemic criticism of various aspects of life under socialism. It made no attempt to hide the fact that a conflict between the individual and the socialist society was indeed possible; nor did it assume truth to be always on the side of society. In A. Iashchin's emblematic short-story "Levers," a group of peasants find they are not content with being reduced to 'levers' of society, and in Dudintsev's Not by Bread Alone, a brilliant inventor is crushed by Soviet bureacracy. Erenburg's Thaw is a polemical attempt to rehabilitate personal experience as the stuff of literature and, correspondingly, to restore the intimate and the emotional to its proper place in the life of Soviet man. Although the Thaw writers were periodically ostracized for having gone too far along this road, theirs was a sanctioned literature, a more or less calculated product of destalinization. This is evident from the example of those writers who went beyond affirmative criticism to reject the very ideal of socialism and who were immediately rejected by society in turn. Thaw or no Thaw - Pasternak's Dr. Zivago and Solzenitsyn's longer works, perhaps the greatest single literary contributions of the period, could not be published.

While Thaw literature can boast no great works, it seems to have made a return to socialist realism impossible. A mere glance at contemporary, mainstream Soviet literature will show that 'critical realism' is the cap that fits, 'socialist realism' being merely the ceremonial headgear worn by official critics on certain occasions.[26] This fact should be seen in the context of another -- perhaps the most important -- effect of the Thaw. Starting around 1954, a series of rehabilitations of Russian writers, living and dead, took place, making the works of Belyi, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, Babel, Bulgakov to mention a few, much more accessible. The unfreezing of the literary past is a process which has not been reversed, but seems in fact to be continuing, so that one day, when the writers now living in emigration are dead, they too may be brought in from the cold. In any case, the availability of such complicated writers as the above makes the idea that literature can be replaced by illustrated propaganda insupportable and thus ensures a certain degree of "sincerity in literature."

Along with the rediscovery of the literary past went the discovery of contemporary Western, especially American literature, which was now being translated. The appearance of Salinger and especially Hemingway in Russian were events of enormous consequence.

The New Wave too was a result of the Thaw, but an unforeseen one. The Thaw writers, interpreting vague signals from above, cautiously set about dismantling the dam separating Soviet literature from life; but the New Wave rose from below, driven by the popular need, after years of war and repressions, to breathe again and to hope, and burst through, flooding the field of Soviet literature with a youthful -- or carnivalistic -- vitality.

2.3.2.2. The Beginning: Poetry revival -- The various epithets derived from the word "youth" which were immediately attached to these writers by the critics signify the relative leniency or perhaps the perplexity with which they were first received: in the very beginning they were seen as youthfully flamboyant and extravagant, but basically harmless. In their self-understanding they were indeed peculiarly young and innocent, and in this, as Bitov points out (see interview, p. 45), they were a typical product of their monolithic society. Although several of these writers were children of 'enemies of the people' and all of them had in some way or other been deprived of a 'normal' childhood,[27] they believed that once the truth about stalinism had been established, that would be the end of it : they felt that the nightmare was over and a new day about to begin.[28] Consequently, they saw themselves as apolitical; they were, in the words of I. Belova, the first and only generation of Soviet writers who "at the moment of their literary formation, did not have to choose between conformism and non-conformism."[29]

The atmosphere at that moment is described in very similar terms by all the writers we interviewed, but perhaps nowhere more vividly recreated than in Aksyonov's The Burn, in the description of jazz saxophonist Samsik Sabler's debut in 1955 :

> The spirit of disobedience, the idea of freedom, dashed from wall to wall like a mindless lunatic, and everyone started to dance, the chandeliers started to sway, and the plush drapes were swept crookedly aside from the windows, like an old woman's skirt -- the gatecrashers were pouring onto the hall.[30]

(This episode, incidentally, calls to mind Aksyonov's account, included in 'Round the Clock Non-Stop of Ginsberg reading "Howl").

It seemed to this generation, then, that the time had come to "return to being simply writers," as A. Soprovskii puts it.[31] As writers, they did not see themselves as being directly opposed to society, rather they felt they were assisting the birth of a new spiritual community in a different dimension, a community which included themselves, their newly rediscovered literary ancestors and Western colleagues and their young listeners and readers, a community of those who burn, in Kerouac's words, "like fabulous Roman candles", or, in Voznesensky's words like the "Fire in the Architectural Institute:"

> Farewell time of boundary
> measurements ! This is life
> - moving from one burning lot
> to another - we're all

on fire, you live
- you're on fire ! [32]

While they differed greatly among themselves on the stylistic level, the New Wave writers were united in their search for truth, in their belief that truth is subjective, that it is discovered in the most intense, personal experiences and that art, being the product of such experiences, is the ideal vehicle of truth. As B. Okudzhava says: "That's the chief task of any artist - to tell about ourselves" (see interview, p. 62).

The Bohemian life-style of these writers, with its partying and traveling, and their high regard for friendship, their sense of brotherhood, of a common quest, is amply testified to in the interviews as well as in The Burn, where the five main protagonists and New Wave representatives refer to a common childhood as well as having parallel adult experiences.

It is, of course, significant, that Aksyonov has included a jazz musician among the five. The New Wave generation, like the beats, grew up to the sound of jazz, and some of the writers, like the Beats, adopted this music as an image of what they wanted to do in literature. In the episode of Sabler's debut, which we referred to above, Aksyonov, like Kerouac before him, translates a jazz improvisation into words, attempting to project the 'naked' expression of the artist's soul.

Another American element in The Burn is Patrick Thunderjet, the professor of Slavic studies and close friend of the five. Thunderjet is as Beat a character as could be, and it is hardly surprising to find him reciting Ginsberg's "Howl" one night in a Moscow bar. That the young New Wave writers were influenced by American literature is beyond doubt. Vail' and Genis define the whole movement (in prose) in terms of two phases: the Hemingway-phase and the Bulgakov-phase.[33] In a questionnaire published by Voprosy literatury (Questions of Literature) in 1962, Aksyonov lists Hemingway, Faulkner and Salinger as having influenced his writing.[34] As for the Beats, however, they were largely unknown in the Soviet Union until Voznesensky, Evtushenko and Aksyonov met them in the USA. But when they met, the experience of a "strange closeness" that Aksyonov wrote about,[35] seems to have been mutual. Michael McClure says that, to him, the New Wave looked like "a copy-cat movement" (see interview, p. 69), whereas Ginsberg comes to the conclusion that he is really a Russian poet put in an American scene (see interview, p. 9).

The New Wave writers, like the Beats, skipped the immediately preceding literary generation and found their roots in the Russian avantgarde of the early 1900s. Blok, Belyi, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, Zoshchenko, Bulgakov and others, whose works were, as mentioned, becoming more easily available from the late fifties on, are all important in this connection, and so is Maiakovsky, who had been available all along and well-known to the writers since their school-days. Gary Snyder observes that, reading Evtushenko and Voznesensky, he felt the influence of Whitman (see p. 37). While Whitman probably came to the Russians through Maiakovsky, it is clear that this poet is a literary ancestor of both the Beat Generation and the New Wave. Voznesensky, who also refers to Whitman, sees another point of contact between the roots of the two movements in their interest in Khlebnikov and Pound respectively (see p. 19).

It was reminiscent of Maiakovsky and the early days of the revolution when, starting in 1954, the New Wave poets began to read their poetry in public to enthusiastic crowds. At first, the readings were unofficial gatherings, but they soon became organized mass events. In 1955 the yearly Poetry Day was instituted, and in 1962 the first of the famous mass readings at the Luzhniki Stadium took place (attendance at these arrangements would reach a record 14.000 before they became too controversial and were discontinued).[36]

Voznesensky, Evtushenko, Akhmadulina, Okudzhava and, to a certain extent, Robert Rozhdestvenskii, quickly gained a status among the young, which can only be compared to the status of certain rock-stars of the West. Gladilin attended one of these early readings:

> There was a huge crowd around the Polytechnical Museum. People asked for extra tickets way over by the subway station. At the main entrance, police had difficulty holding back the flood of students. They let us through the service door. There wasn't a single empty place in the big hall. Gatecrashers who made it through sat right on the steps of the amphitheater. What is this, a concert? Yves Montand or an American jazz band on tour? No, it's a poetry reading, our comrades are speaking.[37]

There are many reasons for the explosive success of the New Wave poets. Russia is, as Voznesensky asserts, a "country of poetry" (see p. 14); Russian poetry was never the possession of the educated few, and the great poets were always regarded with awe and pride. Under Stalinism, poetry had been replaced by oratory; perhaps it was assumed that as Stalinism was now dead, poetry must revive. "The public was hungrily awaiting some new word from the poets," says Akhmadulina, "and the poets, of course, were the first to respond to this mood" (see p. 54). This was due not only to the special place of poetry in the Russian mind or the Russian tradition of listening to poetry as well as reading it, but also, of course, to the bureaucratic publishing process which made the journey of the prose work from author to reader long and perilous. On their part, the poets responding to the popular need for poetry and receiving the acclamation of the masses, were confirmed in their belief that poetry/art was a force that could change the world.

The New Wave, according to Bitov, was "a people's movement, not a literary one" (see p. 44), meaning that the spirit of the poetry Renaissance emerged before the poetry itself, among the young people of the post-war generation, and was then strengthened in turn by the poetry and later the prose of the literary movement. Aksyonov shares this view and seems to regard the so-called "stiliagi", who were visible from around 1952, as the avant-garde of the "people's movement". In The Burn, he gives the following description of the stiliagi:

> The dance hall was full of guys and chicks standing shoulder to shoulder, a pathetic and eager bunch of kids, drunk with the damp breeze of Europe that suddenly had started blowing in our direction. The wretched, universally despised stilyagi with their narrow, stovepipe pants, how they tried to look like boys from Broadway; they would clip the collars off their Lentorg Soviet shirts, glue pieces of rubber to the soles of track shoes, and cut each others' hair in a Canadian crew cut.[38]

To Aksyonov, "the stiliagi were the first Soviet dissidents. It expressed itself only in clothes, manners and tastes, but it was an aesthetic dissidence" (see p. 23). Voznesensky, in contrast, sees the "stiliazhestvo" as a superficial phenomenon which was transformed into a spiritual one only in what he calls the "war of poetry" (see interview, p. 18). In any case, between the New Wave and the young people with the stiliagi as the vanguard, there seems to have been a relationship of mutual identification not unlike the one that existed between the Beat Generation and the hipster culture. In the sixties, the word "bitnik" (Beatnik) comes into use in Russian.[39] In The Burn, Aksyonov has Khrushchev use the term about the New Wave writers, and it appears to stand for a more subversive, more consciously rebellious version of the stiliaga. Similarly, the "bitnitsa" of Voznesensky's "Beatnik's Monologue," under the cover of being an American, represents Soviet youth awakened by the Poetry Renaissance.

Some scholars have credited Evgenii Evtushenko with having "blazed the trail for a remarkable revival of poetry,"[40] while others see him as an unoriginal "shaper" turning other people's thoughts into verse,[41] and still others despise him as a political and literary opportunist. The fact is, that when the young poets began to appear on stage, Evtushenko's popularity was unrivalled by any of the others, as his fame still is today;

what he said invariably produced a strong echo. As he says in Stantsiia Zima (Zima Railwaystation), the long, narrative poem which marked his breakthrough in 1956: "And the changes in life coincide/ With great changes inside." Before Stantsiia Zima, Evtushenko had achieved some success writing intimate, lyrical poetry, but, perhaps under the influence of meeting his audience face to face, he decided this was not enough, he would be a civic poet, a spokesman and spiritual leader of his generation. Some of his poems in this vein were acts of considerable courage, notably "Babii Jar," 1961 (about Soviet antisemitism) and "Stalin's Heirs," 1962, but, to the amazement of his colleagues, Evtushenko always managed to bounce back after each attack on him and to publish again: Obeshchanie (The Promise), 1957, Iabloko (The Apple),1960, Neznost' (Tenderness), 1962, Vzmakh Ruki (Sweep of the Hand), 1962, Kater Sviazi (The Mailboat),1966, Bratskaia GES (Bratsk Power Station), 1967, Idut belye snegi (White Snow is Falling), 1969 etc. He survived perhaps the most serious crisis in his career in 1963 after having published his Precocious Autobiography in Paris in 1962.

Evtushenko's technique of those years seems to have been shaped by the platform : there are catchy rhymes and oratory, and there is a tendency to explain things more fully than would have been necessary were the poems intended for reading only.

Tackling the big issues, Evtushenko never forgets about himself, relating the concerns of Evtushenko to the concerns of the world in a sometimes disarming, sometimes preposterous way, not unlike Ginsberg. In an effort to identify with the young generation, he casts his lyric 'I' as a symbol of "Youth:" inquisitive, open-minded and greedy for experiences. Inevitably, although this poetry worked, it sometimes seems as though he is concerned mainly with promoting the existing myth about himself as a romantic knight of youth.

Like Evtushenko, Andrei Voznesensky helped voice the criticism and formulate the ideals of the young generation, but he is a much less topical and much more complicated poet. Stylistically, he is the true heir of the Silver Age poets; his experimentations have brought him frequent accusations of "formalism". But his habit of combining disparate elements in daring metaphors - for instance using Kennedy airport as an image of the inspired poet - is not just a technique; it reflects Voznesensky's belief that under the surface there is a "secret meaning of things," as Ferlinghetti would have put it. The title of Voznesensky's second collection of poems Treugol'naia grusa (The triangular Pear), 1962, suggests this urge to go beneath the surface, to find the triangular essence of the pear, which may reflect Voznesensky's interest in the philosophy of Pasternak, whose disciple he professes to be.

'Poetry' is a frequently recurring theme in Voznesensky, important already in his first collection *Parabola* (The Parabola), 1960, where creative freedom and the specifically poetic way of looking at the world are presented as necessities of life.

During the 1963 campaign, Voznesensky, along with other New Wave writers, was forced to recant, and his subsequent publication was a long, ambiguous poem on Lenin , *Longiumeau*, 1963. This was followed by the collections *Antimiry* (Antiworlds), 1964 and *Akhillesovo serdtse* (The Achilles Heart), 1966, and the long poem *Oza*, 1964, which represent the natural development of tendencies present in Voznesensky's earliest work.

Poetry as theme, whether it be the miracle of inspiration or the pain of "muteness," is also characteristic of Bella Akhmadulina's work, which is not nearly as extensive as that of Evtushenko or Voznesensky. She has often said that, to her, writing is a tortuous process, and she does not hide the fact that she often has difficulties publishing her work. Nearly all her published poems of the late fifties and early sixties are contained in the two slim volumes *Struna* (The String), 1962 and *Uroki Muzyki* (Music Lessons), 1969.

Formally, although she is inventive in creating rhymes and metaphors, Akhmadulina is a more disciplined poet than either Evtushenko or Voznesensky. Striving for perfection in simplicity and subtlety in concreteness, she reflects such poetic ideals as Pushkin, Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva.

Like Evtushenko, to whom she was married from 1954 to 1957, Akhmadulina depends on the contact with her readers and feels responsible to them. But to her, the poet's responsibility is to create a heightened sense of reality which eludes rationalization and which, in her case, often arises from introspection.

Akhmadulina's close friend Bulat Okudzhava is a little older than the other New Wave poets, but he made his appearance around the same time. He has published only a few slim volumes of poetry, *Ostrova* (Islands), 1959, *Veselyi barabanshchik* (The Happy Drummer), 1964 and *Mart velikodushnyi* (Generous Month of March), 1967, and although he insists that he sings his poems only because "Some things are not published"(see interview), it was as a troubadour that he had the greatest impact during the sixties. Since his first public performance in 1960, private tape recordings have carried his "Make Love Not War" message everywhere in the Soviet Union. Though mostly sad and ironical in content, Okudzhava's songs are always suffused with a lyricism that betrays a basic love of life. Simple and unassuming, they provide relief from the cliches that surround Soviet people in their public life, and they seem to say that the power to make life beautiful rests with the individual.

Another bard associated with the New Wave is the younger Vladimir Vysotsky. Vysotsky's humour is grimmer than Okudzhava's, his satire more acid, and his songs convey a wider range of emotions: from the darkly ecstatic to the tragic. Because of his anarchic, "Beat" life-style as well as his protest songs, he has become a kind of symbol of the spirit of freedom (a figure who, with regard to his significance to the movement, is comparable to Neal Cassady). Vysotsky's popularity is universal in the Soviet Union and has if anything increased since his death in 1980. A small collection of his songs and poems was published in the Soviet Union only after his death: Nerv (Nerve), 1981.

2.3.2.2. Consolidation in Prose -- While the New Wave started out as a poetry revival in the fifties, attention shifted to prose in the beginning of the sixties. As Voznesensky explains:

> Poetry reacts more quickly than prose; a prose writer must think, then write his book, then go through the long process of publishing. Even if a poem has not yet been typed, it is still a poem in the poet's pocket and he can read it. (See interview, p. 15)

Around 1960, when the poets were already famous, the New Wave writers were still in the process of making themselves known. True, Anatolii Gladilin had already published his Khronika vremen Viktora Podgurskogo (A Chronicle of the Times of Viktor Podgursky, 1956), which he considers the beginning of the New Wave confessional prose, and Dym v glaza (Smoke in the Eyes, 1959), and Anatolii Kuznetsov had published Prodolzenie legendy (The Continuation of a Legend) in 1957, but the real turnaround came in 1960-61. As Gladilin pointed out to us: "Aksyonov became the leader of the movement in one day, because A Ticket to the Stars (1961) was an enormous success" (see interview). Two years earlier, Vassily Aksyonov, a medical doctor and graduate of Leningrad State University, had published his first stories in the journal Youth, and in 1960 his first novel Kollegi (Colleagues) had brought him some recognition, although it was structured in a rather schematic socialist realist manner. But only his second novel Zvezdnyi bilet (A Ticket to the Stars) brought him to prominence. In it, he described the revolt of Soviet teenagers against the expectations of their parents and their society, and he introduced the slang of the urban youth, for which he was severely criticized. The issue of Youth containing A Ticket to the Stars was sold out in hours, and for many months the novel was the subject of heated discussions in Soviet journals and newspapers (see **2.4**). It was quickly translated into many languages, and suddenly Aksyonov along with Evtushenko and Voznesensky was known all over the world as one of the young rebels in Russian literature.

Like Gladilin's A Chronicle of the Times of Viktor Podgursky and Pervyi den' novogo goda (The First Day of the New Year, 1963), Kuznetsov's The Continuation of a Legend and, for instance , Bitov's "Na Praktike" (Practical Training, 1962), Aksyonov's novel was concerned with the life of the non-conformist young people in the cities, and it has often been compared to J.D.Salinger's Catcher in the Rye. A similar 'youth'-trend is evident among the Beats, for instance in Kerouac's Pic or McClure's The Mad Cub. About the 'youth'-theme Gladilin says:

> The slang of the golden youth, not golden, that is, but city youth: we brought it into literature with great difficulties, and in doing so we gave it the right to exist. Very difficult it was. That is precisely why we were persecuted. On the whole we had no particular intentions other than trying to speak the way our contemporaries spoke. (See interview, p. 76)

Speaking like the new generation of urban youth and identifying with it, the writers naturally became attracted to what Bitov calls "The core of the generation" (see interview) -- the urge to travel. We are not talking about the fact that most of the writers and poets were sent by various publishing houses on assignments to "meet the people" in the kolkhozes of White Russia, the canning factories of Northern Siberia, or the sovkhozes of Turkmenistan. We are talking about a highly significant psychological characteristic of a whole generation : the restlessness, the inner desire to get away and to explore the unknown.

In the years after the appearance of A Ticket to the Stars, which was itself based on the journey of its protagonists in an attempt to escape the pressures of society, Aksyonov's stories, with few exceptions, took place on journeys at random, like "Na polputi k lune" ("Half-way to the Moon", 1962), "Pobeda" (The Victory, 1965), Pora, moi drug, pora (It's Time, My Friend, It's Time, 1964), even as late as Zatovarennaia bochkotara (Surplussed Barrelware, 1968), and Poiski zhanra (In Search of a Genre, 1978). Like Sal and Dean of On the Road, the restless young protagonists of Aksyonov and Gladilin were always going somewhere in their blue jeans with their transistor radios playing noisy, decadent Western jazz and rock'n'roll.

In many of the works of Andrei Bitov the journey motif is especially important. In his Sem' putesestvij (Seven Journeys, 1976), containing: Takoe dolgoe detstvo (Such a

Long Childhood), Uroki Armenii (Armenian Lessons), Puteshestvie k drugu detstva (Journey to a Childhood Friend), Odna strana (One Country),a.o., the motif became, as he says, "a weapon in my hand" (see interview, p. 50). To him as the iniator of the 'psychological' brand of New Wave prose, the journey was an instrument for exploring the psychology of the young protagonists as well as social issues.

Bitov was the first Leningrad member of the New Wave movement. Everything had started earlier in Moscow, the most international and sensitive city in the Soviet Union. But as Bitov points out in the interview what came out of Leningrad was generally deeper and more serious, the psychological and philosophical trends were born here, in the literary association headed by Bitov. But the fate of the poetry and prose from Leningrad was to be tragic: "We came too late to the publishers, to the wave" (see interview, p. 46). In the interview, Bitov describes how some of the members of the original group died, while others went insane or emigrated to the West, he himself being the only one left living and writing in the Soviet Union. Stressing that the Leningrad prose was more intellectual and less concerned with politics, he continues :

> But it didn't find its reader, or it did with a long delay, and, by and large, it did not have any influence on the "all-Russian" process. If you compare the dates of publication, you will understand that these writers wrote at the same time and the same way, but by the time they were published they sounded dissimilar - that was their fate. (see interview, p. 47)

2.3.2.3. After the Wave -- Bitov touches on a phenomenon common to all non-conformist writing in the Soviet Union - the problem of censorship. If we judge by what was published officially in the Soviet Union we may very well get a completely wrong picture of the whole movement. It is of course essential to keep this in mind when comparing the New Wave and the Beat Generation. The Beats, while they did have problems with censorship and 'commercial' censorship, were after all able to get published in one way or the other, and they did not have to deal with the pervading influence of self-censorship.

The writer in the Soviet Union who wants to say something which is unacceptable to the censor has the following opotions:

1. He can forget about it (practise self-censorship),

2. He can publish it through samizdat (underground publishing) or tamizdat (unsanctioned publishing in the West) or, in the case of performing poets and bards, magnitizdat (unofficial tape-recordings),
3. He can try to fool the censor by wrapping the message up in highly figurative or esoteric language,
4. He can write for his desk- drawer.

The New Wave writers have, in fact, tried all options. Almost all of them have published 'toothless', self-censored works, and some, like Evtushenko and Rozhdestvenskii, have ended up writing only this kind of poetry. Many, such as Bitov, Aksyonov, Akhmadulina, Okudzhava, Vysotsky and Evtushenko in the early days (cf. his Precocious Autobigraphy) have published underground or in the West and consequently exposed themselves to the retaliation of the Establishment. But all of them have made use of the third way. Even after the crack-downs on the movement in 1962-64, the prose writers managed to publish some highly figurative works such as Aksyonov's Surplussed Barrelware in which the critical, religious, and deeply personal/confessional message was hidden in the multi-leveled grotesque structure, and some seemingly 'innocent' historical novels which implied parallels to the present which the censor either did not detect or could not decently point out. Okudzhava, Aksyonov, Gladilin and others contributed to this 'historical' trend. Gladilin stresses in the interview that even after 1968, they still managed to say something now and then.

The fourth option -- writing for the desk-drawer with no hope of publishing -- has blurred the general picture of the New Wave a great deal. Aksyonov, for one, started immediately after the Khrushchevian attacks in 1963 to write sharply critical plays and prose which had no chance whatsoever of being published in the Soviet Union. Only shortly before and after his arrival in the West in 1980 did the existence of such works as Stal'naia ptitsa (The Steel Bird), Chetyre temperamenta (The Four Temperaments), Aristofaniana s liagushkami (Aristophaniana with Frogs), Tsaplia (The Heron), and his most important work Ozhog (The Burn) become known. In our context, The Burn is a central work because it tells the story of the New Wave in a very Beat manner. Works by Gladilin and others, who have emigrated, have had a similar fate, and, undoubtedly, there are many more works still hidden in drawers in the Soviet Union. This fact makes it difficult to understand the scope of the movement as a whole and even that of the individual writers' contributions. It forces us to deal with works which, when taken out of the context of Soviet censorship and self-censorship, seem strangely naive and innocent and far removed from American Beat writing. To a certain extent, it forces us to rely on secondary sources, statements by writers and speculation. And it makes it difficult to determine when or even whether the New Wave came to an end.

Opinions differ on this point. Did it end with the 1963 meeting, the trials in the mid-sixties, the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, or can the 1979 Metropole -affair be seen as the last effort of the New Wave? We got the following answers from some of the participants in the movement:

A. Gladilin:

> The last publication of the New Wave was, if I am not mistaken, Surplussed Barrelware from 1968... But we got a sign that everything would soon be over as early as in 1963 at the meeting with Khrushchev. (See interview, p. 79)

A. Voznesensky:

> It was everywhere, in different forms, probably because of some international maturation of the human psyche. But I think that today there is a kind of common psychological decline taking place, both there and here, coming from the danger of nuclear war. People began to analyze, to look around... even Allen Ginsberg wears a tie... They all went to universities to study. But then it will start all over again. (See interview, p. 16)

B. Akhmadulina:

> Well lately ... we parted. It has been coming for a long time, but especially lately it has become obvious... I'm simply glad that now it is clear that we who were together and started it all now exist separately, each doing things in his own way. (See interview, p. 54)

V.Aksyonov:

> "... in sixty eight the 'hang-over' began.. ." (See interview, p. 26)

A. Bitov:

> I think that when the attacks on Youth magazine started after the publication of Aksyonov's A Ticket to the Stars (1961), they were attacks on the movement too. At the same time the writers began to develop as human beings. So for one reason they were criticized, while for a completely different reason they changed as people. They grew up, their personalities matured, and then they left the wave in different directions according to their personalities. (see p. 47-48)

It is probably impossible to determine which of the statements is correct. There is no doubt that the New Wave movement peaked in the very beginning of the sixties, but although the festive part of it was over no later than 1968, it did show its face even later. It is probably correct to consider the Metropole anthology (1979) the last desperate attempt by some of the New Wave writers to revive the spirit of the past. Metropole was published openly, though not through official channels, and as such it was a great challenge not only to the institution of censorship but to the whole literary bureaucracy and its monopoly. It was edited by Aksyonov, Bitov and others, and contained contributions by several of the former New Wave writers including Aksyonov, Bitov, Akhmadulina, Voznesensky and Vysotsky as well as by some younger and relatively unknown writers. It was a sensation -- probably the most significant event in Russian literature in the last decade, and it produced echoes not only in the official Soviet literary establishment and the Soviet underground, but also in the Western press and among emigrants. What was sensational was not so much the contents of the anthology, which were, surprisingly, not particularly anti-Soviet, but rather the very existence of this semi-official publication of uncensored writings. The challenge was met by repressions which started a chain of events leading, eventually, to the emigration of Aksyonov and several others, and to the expulsion from the Writers Union of some of the younger contributors. (The atmosphere surrounding the event is reflected in Aksyonov's latest novel Skazhi izium -- Say Cheese, 1986). The attitude of the Metropole participants was one of assumed naivety, as they pretended to believe in their constitutional right to do what they were doing. It was clearly a calculated attempt to stir up the waters, and in this it succeded. Apart from the firm reaction of the state and the success in the Western media, the anthology was received with furious comments by the underground writers living in exile. The self-styled "true Beatniks" like the poet and novelist, Eduard Limonov, and the poet Konstantin Kuzminskii (both of whom now live in the West) were clearly envious of the publicity and the scandal caused by the anthology and loudly accused Aksyonov, Voznesensky and Bitov of being officiosos posing as underground writers or 'official non-conformists' in line with the disinformation campaign of the party.

In the large collection of "truely non-conformist poetry" by contemporary Soviet underground writers, The Blue Lagoon, Kuzminskii angrily proclaims that "the avantgarde group of the mid-fifties, who started a revolution of the rhyme -- or was it the theme -- no longer exists", because they, with the exception of Bella Akhmadulina, have sold their souls to the devil, that is, the state. Kuzminskii even goes on to suggest that the original American Beats are no longer the real Beats:

> To this day the beatnik who converted to Zen buddhism, Allen Ginsberg, remembers the "rebel" Evtushenko. Allen and I were sitting around at my place, we had nothing to talk about, he is living in the past... we talked about Evtushenko. You can't ignore him, you know! He is the most popular poet, a symbol of his generation.
>
> However, I have to inform you, that to our generation, he is no symbol at all, our symbols are the others, those who did not sell out.[42]

The group around The Blue Lagoon is surrounded by terminology confusion. Apart from personal attacks such as the above, they have attacked just about everybody around. This is what Aksyonov is hinting at, when he in Limonov finds "a certain, provincial herostraticism" (see interview), that is, an enormous desire to become famous. The Lagoon group, consisting of underground poets of the sixties and seventies, mainly from Leningrad, claims to be the Russian Beats. However, drawing parallels to the West, we believe it would be more appropriate to apply the term 'hippies' to this group. In his introduction to The Blue Lagoon, John E. Bowlt, too, suggests that this poetry would be more in line with the Western hippie movement because it is concerned with such themes as "anti-war" and "environmentalism."[43] The fact is that the Lagoon group belongs to a younger generation than the New Wave, opposing it and envying its success.

In 'Round the Clock Non-Stop, Aksyonov writes that while the Western hippies did not create a literature of their own, they created a style and influenced the way of life of a large segment of society.[44] In the Soviet Union the opposite is true -- as The Blue Lagoon proves, the Russian hippies did contribute significantly to literature although they were not officially published, but their influence on society has been negligible and the Lagoon group is now a strangely isolated entity. Just as the hippies took over after the Beat Generation, the Lagoon group owes much to its predecessor, the New Wave movement.

2.4. RECEPTION.

2.4.1. American Reception of the Beat Generation.

We have seen how the mass media played an all-important role in presenting the stereotyped image of the Beat Generation, depicting the Beats as a bunch of outrageous bohemians gathering at drunken parties and smoking marijuana while engaging in scandalous sex orgies. Hundreds of reviews, articles and books have described the movement , and the bulk of the criticism has been negative. Thus, most scholarly works containing critical surveys have focused on the unfavourable critical reception.

But positive and serious analyses of the movement were indeed published as well. For instance, some of the Beat's older colleagues, like Norman Mailer, Kenneth Rexroth, and Henry Miller, understood the importance and "seriousness" of the Beat Generation as a social and artistic movement. From Henry Miller's preface to The Subterraneans it is clear that he saw Kerouac as his true follower in confessional prose. And, what is more surprising, he, in contrast to most other critics, praised Kerouac as a great innovator of language:

> Jack Kerouac has done something to our immaculate prose from which it may never recover. A passionate lover of language, he knows how to use it. Born virtuoso as he is, he takes pleasure in defying the laws and conventions of literary expression which cripple genuine, untrammeled communication between reader and writer.[1]

Furthermore, Miller pointed out that Kerouac and the Beats represented the sane subculture, opposed to the insanity of the scientific and military establishment.

The question of sanity vs. insanity also played an important role in Norman Mailer's famous essay "The White Negro"(1957). "The White Negro" is about the American hipster, his social background, mental outlook and philosophy as opposed to the squares; however, it can also be seen as a discussion of the essentials of the Beat Generation. According to Mailer the hipster was an outcast of the post-World War II human condition, based on "collective conformism" and the awareness of the A-bomb. Living with death as a threathening possibility, made the hipster divorce himself from the square society. In the non-conformist jazz world of the Negroes and the urban Bohemia the hipster became a White Negro; that is, in Mailers terms: a philosophical, psychopathic existentialist, saint, bullfighter, and lover, the common denominator being:

" their burning consciousness of the present, exactly that incandescent consciousness which the possibilities within death has opened for them."[2] Mailer argued that Hip represented a new philosophy which he saw as the only alternative to Liberalism and Marxism, both of which had proven failures.

Kenneth Rexroth's essay "Disengagement and the Art of the Beat Generation"(1957) can be found in most Beat anthologies. It was less radical than "The While Negro" and less concerned with sociology. It dealt with the Art of the Beat Generation. Rexroth rejected the idea of the 40s that "the generation of experimentation and revolt is over". "Nothing could be less true", - Rexroth wrote, -"The Youngest generation is in a state of revolt so absolute that its elders cannot even recognize it."[3] According to Rexroth the young post-war artistic generation was characterized by disaffiliation, alienation and rejection, as were other artists such as Charlie Parker, Dylan Thomas and Jackson Pollock. Rexroth concluded that: "The avant-garde has not only not ceased to exist. It's jumping all over the place. Something's happening, man."[4]

Like Miller, Mailer and Rexroth, several critics viewed the Beat Generation favourably, as for instance Basil Ross, or, at least, seriously, like Frank A. Butler, John G. Roberts and W.R. Smith. In addition there were excited reviews by some of the Beats themselves and by their associates such as John Clellon Holmes, Lawrence Lipton and Seymor Krim).[5]

In a sense one could justifiably argue that many of the scholarly works on the Beats that followed made the same error as the popular press by focusing primarily on the negative criticism. By doing so a stereotype image of the critic has been created. M.Y. Lin, for instance, sums up the negative criticism by what she sees as an united Establishment. Her analysis of the negative criticism is correct: popular magazines like Life and Playboy did try to discredit the movement by establishing its McCarthyite "un-Americanness:"

> Having determined their un-American character, the Establishment then proceeded either to dismiss the Beats contemptuously as weak and harmless freaks, or to regard them as a violent street gang which called to mind the terror of the Nazis.[6]

The negative criticism can be divided into the following categories according to the political and/or ethical outlook of the critic:

1. viewing the Beats as poor writers;

2. being morally indignated;

3. criticizing the Beat's lack of will to act against the corrupt society (the Socialist view);

4. criticizing the Beat's lack of will to improve society which may have some flaws (the Establishment view).

In the last two cases the criticism is basically directed at the "apolitical" character of the movement.

The most devastating attack on the Beats -- "The Know-Nothing Bohemians" -- was written by Norman Podhoretz (1958; see **2.4.2.1.**)

Since the immediate response to the emergence of the movement, many studies of it have been undertaken revealing a much different image. We shall return to these studies throughout this dissertation.

2.4.2. Russian Reception of the New Wave.

Like the Beat generation The New Wave had its supporters among the older generation of writers. Ilia Erenburg, who was very internationally minded, was pleased to find affinities between the young Americans, especially Salinger, and Aksyonov and Kazakov.[7]

Valentin Kataev, a well-known writer and editor of the journal Youth , was the first to publish many of the participants in the movement, and by doing so he defended them. He also wrote articles on individual poets and writers -- even after he had been removed from the journal's editorial board. In 1965, for example, he wrote an essay on Voznesensky comparing him to Maiakovsky and Pasternak. He described a reading by the poet:

> The auditorium is motionless. Everybody has quietly fixed their eyes on the poet, reading on his lips the lines that slip away into the air. Here are writers, poets, students, playwrights, an actress, a few journalists, acquaintances of acquaintances and non-acquaintances of non-acquaintances, unknown young people -- boys and girls in dark-grey pullovers, two physicists, a welder from an automobile factory, and even one antagonistic critic.[8]

In a similar manner Pavel Antokolskii wrote about Akhmadulina in 1971, and

Konstantin Paustovskii about Kazakov and Trifonov in 1972.[9]

Even before Khrushchev's famous speech at the Party Congress in 1956 the young Evtushenko signalled the beginning of the revolt against the older generation ("On two poetic generations").[10] Articles on the "Fourth Generation" by Iu. Surovtsev followed;[11] and soon Evtushenko, Akhmadulina and Voznesensky were the stars on the literary scene -- praised and cursed.

In 1958 Evtushenko was attacked by none less than his colleague, the famous writer Vladimir Soloukhin, who blamed him for being "declamatory" and for criticizing the "wrong" people, that is, internal Soviet enemies and not official "true" enemies of the Soviet Union. What Soloukhin hinted at was, of course, the fact that Evtushenko was speaking out openly against the old Stalinist guard, and his "provocative public manners."[12]

Later the same year, however, Voznesensky was praised by Lev Oshanin for doing the same thing: "because he is not afraid of serious and acute problems about which it is far more difficult to write; and he resolves those problems truthfully, without any rhetoric."[13]

A month later the former constructivist Kornelii Zelinskii expressed a similar favourable attitude towards the young poets, in particular Voznesensky and his ability to "feel the psychology of the New Soviet Man."[14]

It was evident that the reception of the New Wave was part of the political struggle between the young liberals and the old hardliners, between "reformism" and "dogmatism". And for some time it seemed as if the liberals had the upper hand. Despite continuous morbid attacks from the dogmatics, such as the article by V. Druzin, in which he labled Evtushenko, Akhmadulina and Robert Rozhdestvenskii "decadents,"[15] it seemed that the liberal critics were in more accordance with the spirit of the time and with the reformist intensions of the party leadership.

In November 1960 the liberal journal New World, edited by Aleksandr Tvardovskii, published V. Runin's article "The Discussion Must Continue," which was a strong defence of the poet's right to "self-expression," to express his lyrical "I" and his own inner world. Furthermore, Runin criticized the "vulgar" sociology of Soviet literary practice, raising a storm of protest among dogmatic critics.[16]

The culmination of the success of the liberals was, probably, the article "For Poetic Activity," appearing on the pages of New World in January 1961. It was written by the critics A. Menshutin and Andrei Siniavskii (who was later imprisoned and then exiled to the West for his writings under the pseudonym Abram Tertz). The manner of this daring defense of the young poets was unusually fresh and undogmatic, without the usual stereotypical phrases and abstractions. As is evident from Siniavskii's famous essay--"What Is Socialist Realism?"-- the critic intended not only to redefine the literary doctrine but to remove it. But in this article he and his co-author engaged in the more modest task of redefining some of its categories. The category of "partiinost'" (party-mindedness) was, according to the critics, much too narrowly understood:

> ... mainly boiling down to themes of current interest, to the ability to respond quickly, and so on. However, "poetic activity" should be understood much more broadly. It includes a very large sphere of phenomena, of which the most important, of course, is the personality of the poet and the birth of this personality, entailing a whole world of new individual perception.[17]

The critics especially welcomed the young poet's "readiness to set out on a long journey -- not only in a literary sense but also in a metaphorical, aesthetic sense,"[18] and praised their active, energetic expression of the personal, subjective foundation of poetry.

Siniavskii and Menshutin thus clearly took the side of the young poets. And they sharply turned against the dogmatics:

> And it is great that one can find such features in our young generation, which show spiritual health, freshness, spontaneity, the absence of that narrow, ascetic-doctrinary view of life, which often made itself felt in the past.[19]

The article generated a long and painful discussion in the months to come in several journals. And despite some attempts to defend the views of Siniavskii and Menshutin -- as for instance Naum Korzhavin's article "In defence of a banal truth"[20] -- it became evident that they were too liberal. They were accused of being "formalists" who did not care about "ideological content" in several articles in the journal October.

In the August issue of New World they, as well as Runin, were given the opportunity of replying, and the editors made some conclusive, critical remarks, by which they mistakenly hoped to end the discussion.

The discussion went on. The young critic Lev Anninskii published a serious and sympathetic study of the young poets in which he rejected all the accusations directed at Voznesensky.[21] But the dogmatics were gaining the upper hand. October, which had the reputation of being very conservative, took on the whole new generation of writers, poets and critics in a series of articles. In the June issue B. Solov'ev angrily turned down the liberal line of Runin, Siniavskii and Menshutin.[22] And in September 1961 the editors of October severely criticized New World for having published and supported this kind of "subjectivism" and "formalism" at all.

In the following issues of October the attacks became more and more furious. Larisa Kriachko, to whom we shall return shortly, applied the same terms, "subjectivism" and "formalism," to Runin, Siniavskii, Anninskii, Voznesensky, Evtushenko, Akhmadulina and Aksyonov.[23]

It became clear that the dogmatics were about to win, and when Khrushchev in March 1963 personally interfered and called the young generation to order, the discussion died out, at least for some time.

The prose writers were, naturally, slower to get started, and the critics did not really sense the new phenomenon in prose until the beginning of the 60s. There were a few fairly sympathetic reactions to the works of Iurii Kazakov, Anatolii Gladilin and Anatolii Kuznetsov, like D. Miljutin's review of Kuznetsov's Continuation of A Legend in 1957.[24] But the real discussion of the phenomenon started in 1960.

New World greeted the youth movement centered in Youth. A. Berzer praised the works by Gladilin, Aksyonov and Kuznetsov (especially Continuation of A Legend and his short stories): "Youth runs through these works and constitutes the main part of their charm and their very aesthetic peculiarity"; and, excusing their inability to write about others than themselves, the critic went on:

> In this novel [Continuation of a Legend] there was much fiction; one could feel the search for new ways, the urge to write in a new way. On the whole, this urge is common to the "young" novels from the journal Youth.[25]

And, not surprisingly, Aksyonov's Colleagues was highly praised by M. Blinkova in the same issue of New World. Discussing the tendency in Colleagues, Continuation of A Legend, and Gladilin's Smoke In the Eyes to depict the inner world of contemporary youth, she especially dwelled on the truthfulness of these novels:

> The author of Colleagues is open and excited. His novel is perceived as a peculiar confession which also uncovers the confusion of a young man at the most difficult moment of his life.

About the formal aspects of these novels she wrote:

> But there is a common tendency here: to find sufficiently dynamic and laconic means of expressing artistically the problems which worry the young generation today.[26]

A. Makarov's long article "A serious life" was in the same sympathetic vein. The critic defended the young movement which he called "The Fourth Generation" from the accusations of being "anti-heroic", "anti-positive", "subjective", "confessional" etc., by stating that the times had changed and had created completely new problems for the youth to solve.[27] Furthermore, Makarov insisted on the right of the writers to depict reality honestly and with "artistic truth."

V. Nazarenko's article " 'I' and 'We' " is interesting because in it the author drew some parallels between the stiliaga-hero of the young prose and Salinger's Holden Caulfield. The basic argument was that Salinger's novel was "safeguarding, preaching the stability and beneficiality of the existing society," because the writer had carried out his analysis of the hero's spiritual crisis from a Freudian point of view rather than analysing his social background. N. Dubov's novel A Hard Test Nazarenko indirectly accused of being an imitation of the novels of Salinger and Kerouac.

Oleg Vitkovskii, the protagonist of Dubov's novel, is a stiliaga; and Nazarenko described the whole phenomenon of the stiliagi as " a certain low level of spiritual development,"[28] and he blamed Dubov for not explaining the social background of this.

The discussion thus turned to the protagonists of individual works rather than to the phenomenon of the New Wave as a whole. One of the basic categories of Socialist Realism had always been the Positive Hero, and the question for many critics was whether it would be possible to retain the positiveness while depicting the young protagonist -- stiliaga or other.

I. Vinogradov asked himself this question and tried it on Aksyonov's Colleagues in his article "On the Contemporary Hero." Although he did find the novel disputable he liked the heroes' "serious, responsible attitude towards their opinions, views and actions."[29] And such positive psychological traits were, according to the critic, definitely based upon the reality of contemporary society.

Again, as in the case with the criticism of the poets, it looked as if the liberals were strongest for some time, but the dogmatics were soon to counterattack. They particularily disagreed with Makarov and Anninskii. A. Vlasenko was very upset by Makarov's statement that Aksyonov and his colleagues were innovative in comparison with the writers of the 30s and the 40s. On the contrary, Vlasenko wrote: "The 30s were characterized by a rapid flight of creativity and innovation in all spheres of life"[30] (our underlining -IL/PD).

With the appearance of Aksyonov's A Ticket to the Stars (June - July 1961) the attacks became even more bitter. K. Pozdniaev stated that Aksyonov liked his stiliagi-heroes too much: "The author does not see anything reprehensible in the conduct of these kids, in their amusements and moral". And then the critic described with disgust what they stood for:

> Drinking at restaurants; playing poker; mindless passtimes; rock'n'roll; rubbing elbows with the "black-marketeers"; cynicism; and banal conversations --that is their world.

He furthermore appealed to the Socialist Realist category of typicality by insisting that this was not the typical Soviet youth but a fashion imported from Western literature which was completely alien to Soviet reality. The "escapes" of Holden Caulfield and Aksyonov's heroes could only be explained by:

> ...moral dissoluteness. It is not at all like that when our boys and girls, leaving their homes, go out to really great matters: to the virgin soil, to build communism.[31]

M. Gus, though, admitted that such anarchistic elements did exist in the Soviet Union, but they were exceptions and Aksyonov did not explain the emergence of such "exceptional anarchists".[32] In the same vein was Iu. Idashkin's article "About Searching and the Truth of Life." Accusing Aksyonov and playwright Viktor Rozov of plagiarizing Salinger he insisted that their heroes were not taken out of Soviet reality and that their "search" was empty, only for the search's own sake. A Ticket to The Stars and Rozov's A.B.C.D.E. were failures because the authors, "seeing a small number of unsteady, rebellious young people, did not understand a thing about the nature of such aspirations."[33]

So, despite some liberal attempts, for instance by Stanislav Rassadin in Youth , to continue the battle, it was lost. Dogmatism had won by Khrushchev's fall, which was clear already in 1963 on the pages of October where the movement was dealt the final blow.[34] However, the critics continued to discuss the implications of the movement, in retrospect, and the new works that, nevertheless, continued to appear. And, in many ways the discussion became more serious.

V. Akimova, for example, gave a very sober account of the merits and shortcomings of the "Fourth Generation" prose. She stated that this phenomenon had been the most important in Soviet literature since the War, but that the writers had now changed and grown up. She rejected the accusations aimed at Aksyonov, Kuznetsov and Gladilin of "searching in vain."[35]

Akimova's article and A. Urban's "Time, Hero, Style" were, in fact, attempts to promote and support experimentation and "search", and to rid the word "formalism" of its negative connotations.

The well-known critic G. Brovman accused Aksyonov and Bitov of not choosing sides, of not having the right moral outlook:

> It is a shame that Andrei Bitov does not also notice how passivity and contemplation ruin his hero. It is as if the writer even considers this to be a virtue of the hero.[36]

But the young pleiad of liberal critics, such as Feliks Kuznetsov and Makarov, had not completely been quieted down yet. Kuznetsov, who later turned his back on the New Wave and became one of the chief officials in the literary bureaucracy, wrote a long defence of the "confessional prose" of the "Fourth Generation," insisting that in spite of the "metaphysical character", "intimacy," and "infantilism" of this prose it, nevertheless, reflected some real phenomena.[37]

The same year (1966) a long article, "After Five Years" by A. Makarov, appeared in Zvezda. It was a follow-up to the article written five years earlier,"A Serious Life," which had been very sympathetic to the New Wave. "After Five Years" was, in fact, the last serious article on the New Wave prose to appear in the Soviet Union; and probably one of the best. Makarov described the evolution of the writers from a youthful group to mature individual writers.[38]

In the late 60s the movement was dead and the individuals had crystallized, as Bitov expresses it in our interview with him; some had become famous, some had gone underground, others were silenced, and yet others were about to emigrate. The critics no longer talked about "new prose" or the "Fourth Generation." Instead there was a tendency to re-evaluate the New Wave and to downgrade its importance. A. Lanshchikov almost rejected the existence of such a phenomenon as "confessional prose"; and those few writers, who he admitted did write confessionally, produced what he called "regrettable misunderstandings," and he continued:

> Naturally, no new literature could be built on such shaky ground. The quick inflation of confessional prose turned out to be inevitable and natural, because it put itself into the hands of a fashion in society and did not participate in fulfilling society's spiritual needs at the time.[39]

The discussion of the New Wave died out in the Soviet Union, but to some extent it has continued in emigration.

Many of the Russian emigre critics have been no less severe in their criticism of the New Wave; only among them the situation was turned upside-down. Hardliners of the older generation of emigrants, like Iurii Mal'tsev (Vol'naia russkaia literatura) and Grigorii Svirskii (Na lobnom meste) blaimed the New Wave for not telling the truth or only half the truth -- just as the Soviet critics had said. But the "truth" was understood differently by the emigrants! And the extreme underground wing of the younger generation, like K.K. Kuzminskii and Eduard Limonov, angrily and contemptuosly and not without a certain degree of envy, called the New Wave writers and poets official or semi-official supporters of the Soviet regime.[40]

Only recently have members of the third wave emigration begun a more realistic survey of what really happened. Thus the two critics P. Vail' and A. Genis (Sovremennaia russkaia proza) write:

> The Youth-Pleiad - Aksyonov, Gladilin, Balter, Evtushenko, Voznesensky, Rozhdestvensky -- in a few years changed the social climate and communal life...[41]

One of the older generation, however, has always been in line with the New Wave. Andrei Siniavskii not only supported the poets in 1961, he also wrote his famous essay -- "What is Socialist Realism?"-- which reads like a manifesto of the prose-writers, especially Aksyonov and Gladilin:

> I pin my hopes on phantasmogoric art with hypotheses instead of a point to prove and with grotesque instead of chronicling of everyday events. That reflects more fully the spirit of the time.[42]

One wonders why there never was any close alliance between Siniavskii and the New Wave, because Siniavskii has always supported the New Wave; even in emigration his journal Sintaksis has published articles on the New Wave, like I. Beliakova's (pseudonym, the author still lives in Moscow) "The Generation Which Lost Its

Prose-Writers."

Concluding this short survey of the reception of the two movements in their own countries it must be said that there has been a great deal of similarity in the way the American and Soviet literary establishments have reacted: with fury and fear. However, in both countries there were also groups of critics who supported the movements. But in both countries the dogmatic, conservative approach was the dominating one at least at the early stages of the two movements.

To illustrate the extreme this approach would go to, in both countries, we shall permit ourselves a small digression.

2.4.2.1. Digression: the Extremes of the Dogmatic Approach -- In her review of Parkinson's A Casebook on the Beat the Soviet critic A. Elistratova quotes Norman Podhoretz in order to support her own critical view on the Beats:

> Norman Podhoretz's article "The Know-Nothing Bohemians" demonstrates the deliberate primitivism of their language, their emotional poverty and hostility towards the intellect.[43]

This device is very interesting -- a Soviet Marxist dogmatic using an American conservative dogmatic to support her own statement!!

Indeed the Soviet and American dogmatic stereotype reception of the two movements have much in common. Here we shall elaborate on this by comparing Podhoretz's article, Larisa Kriachko's "Observer or Participant" (October, 1, 1962), and Lenina Ivanova's "Thoughts About the Prose of the Young" (October ,8, 1961).

As the title suggests Podhoretz depicts the Beats as a bunch of ignorant Bohemian bums, whose "worship of primitivism and spontaneity .... arises from a pathetic poverty of feeling;"[44] and the revolt they represent is "the revolt of the spiritually underprivileged and the crippled of the soul." In short, he links the Bohemianism of the Beats, as opposed to the intellectual Bohemians of the 20s, to the following elements:

a. violence, criminality, drug addiction;

b. sexual anxiety, and madness;

c. racism;

d. hatred of intellectuals;

e. spiritual poverty;

f. the spirit of Nazism;

g. spontaneity alias subjectivism and solipsism;

h. simple, banal prosody (jazz/bop).

It is difficult to imagine a more savage and subjective description than this one. Even among the ultra-doctrinary Soviet reviews of the New Wave we have not seen any as grim as this one.

The underlying reasons for the total rejection of the movements among some established critics in the USA and the Soviet Union were similar: conformism, fear of change, moral outrage, support for the status quo of the establishment-- literary and political.

Looking at the two Soviet articles chosen it is interesting to notice that Lenina Ivanova uses a protagonist of American writer George Mandel (whom she labels a Beatnik) to illustrate how bad Gladilin is:

> A bourgeois youngster, stunned by the cruelty and injustice surrounding him, revolts. He understands very well that hatred is death, that injustice and black despair, barrenness and spiritual old age are death.

Mrs. Ivanova understands why this could happen in capitalist USA, but how could it happen in the Soviet Union as portrayed in the works of Gladilin? Her answer is, that:

> The lack of high [read: communist] ideals and deep thoughts is often compensated for by a pretentious, sloppy and loud manner of writing.45

This is why, according to Ivanova, Gladilin and his anti-hero do not recognize "enthusiasm," "patriotism," and " Komsomol duty," and turn to a kind of snobbish individualism and subjectivism.

Like Podhoretz, Larisa Kriachko is very ironic with regard to the jazz element of the New Wave. Aksyonov once wrote that patriotism and love of jazz are not mutually exclusive, and to this Kriachko replies: "But is love of jazz an organic and necessary part of patriotism?"[46] Furthermore, she uses almost the same terminology as Podhoretz, describing the New Wave (especially Aksyonov, Voznesensky and Okudzhava): scepticism; cynicism; negativism; infantilism; undialectical thinking; passivity (in Voznesensky) leading to pessimism, eroticism and spiritual emptiness; lack of deep thinking and experience; immaturity; fashionable travelling, etc. etc.

By and large it is safe to conclude that there was much in common between the American and Soviet dogmatic criticism of their "own" movements. In the following we shall have a look at whether this is also reflected in the way they viewed the movement in the "opposite" country.

2.4.3. American Reception of the New Wave.

Quite an impressive amount of New Wave poetry has been published in English translations, although the choice of poems has often been rather random. Evtushenko has without doubt been the most popular. Individual poems and groups of poems by him, Voznesensky, Akhmadulina, Okudzhava, Matveeva and Kazakova have appeared in a large number of collections, magazines and journals. Evtushenko, furthermore, has a number of books in English, among the most important are: Selected Poems (1962); A Precocious Autobiography (1963); The Poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko: 1953 to 1965 (1965); and Stolen Apples (1976) -- with translations by Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, John Updike and others. The same goes for Voznesensky who has published Antiworlds and the Fifth Ace (1966, some of the translations made by W.H. Auden); Selected Poems of Andrey Voznesensky (1964, translated by Anselm Hollo); and Nostalgia for the Present (1978, translated by Ferlinghetti, Ginsberg a.o., and with forewords by Edward Kennedy and Arthur Miller).

Of the prose writers Bitov and Gladilin have been almost overlooked while most of Okudzhava's prose pieces and long historical novels have appeared. Aksyonov has been very successful in the West, probably due to the fact that he seems more western minded and, perhaps, is a better writer. Most of his important short stories and small novels have been published, like, for instance, Colleagues (1962); A Ticket to the Stars (1963); It's Time, My Friend, It's Time (1969); The Steel Bird and other Stories (1977); The Island of Crimea (1982); The Burn (1984).

When looking at the reception in America of the New Wave literature it is of special interest to us to see whether or not the reviewers have noticed any similarity with contemporary American literature (the Beat Generation) and how they evaluate the New Wave both as a group and the individual writers.

As a matter of fact, few American critics have mentioned the similarity between the Beat Generation and the New Wave writers. One article titled "Beats in the U.S.S.R. Fade Away" by Ann McRae appeared in 1978 in Village Voice, but it was concerned with the Russian jazz and hipster subculture as such rather than its literary output:

> The jazz -- the "essence" as Kerouac called it -- was the same. It was absorbed by osmosis and vintage tape recorders from Voice of America radio broadcasts. The "mad people" were the *deti podpolya*, children of the underground -- jazz musicians, poets, artists, and "abnormals"...[47]

Many Western publications of Soviet Russian literature appear with somewhat sensational titles like Poets on Street Corners, Russia's Underground Poets, or The Year of Protest: 1956, stressing the oppositional character of the works and suggesting affinities with similar phenomena elsewhere, but none of them specify any such parallels, and many of them seem to be rather randomly collected and badly translated.[48] Anselm Hollo's translations of Voznesensky were severely criticized for using "Beat lingo" where the poet had not used its equivalent in Russian.[49] On the other hand Robert Creeley, who himself is closely associated with the Beats, accepted that Voznesensky was writing like a Beatnik, be it a "dull" one, in his article "The Beat Voznesensky."[50] Another review of the same volume also criticized Mr. Holllo's translation, but the author admitted that "the spirit of his poetry, Beatnik-like (a Communist variety) ... is captured more successfully."[51]

In yet another review of Voznesensky's poetry he is praised for his Beatness:

> It is rich in the most unexpected images, sounds and rhythms, ranging from the rock'n roll and Negro-jazz rhythms of his American cycle of poems, with their beatnik themes, to the exquisitely elegiac and pianissimo "Autumn in Sigulda."[52]

And in the same review it is mentioned that the old Socialist Realist guard of Soviet critics accused Voznesensky of being a Beatnik.

While Voznesensky has usually been considered a better poet, technically more skilfull, Evtushenko has been received as the spokesman of the young generation, the civic poet. The publication in the West of his autobiography (1963) supported this assumption. In his review of the autobiography Harrison E. Salisbury, probably for the first time in the West, used the term New Wave and dubbed Evtushenko one of its leaders. Salisbury gave an account of the New Wave's background, finding its motivation to be not exclusively literary but also an attempt to open up a whole new atmosphere in the USSR. Drawing a parallel to the British Angry Young Men he stated that the New Wave surged into the forefront of the Russian scene "turbulent, sometimes rowdy, often reckless and frequently disorganized," and he described the conduct of its members as:

> uninhabited fondness for some of the gaudier manifestations of Western culture, tumultuous street poetry readings (sometimes attracting thousands of young people), calculated defiance of all the stodgy norms of the official Stalinist aesthetics.[53]

Saul Bellow suggested in his review of the autobiography that Evtushenko was a "civic poet of the kind as badly needed in the West as in the East, a symbol of the free spirit;"[54] and Olga Carlisle declared the autobiography "the manifesto of a whole new Soviet generation;"[55] Vera S. Dunham called it "the most important social document of contemporary Russia."[56] Most of the critics saw Evtushenko as a public or civic poet, a rebel and envoy, performing artist and civil libertarian, and noted that he lacked self-discipline as a poet. The evaluation of Evtushenko in the West has changed considerably since the early and mid -60s. From the 70s on he has been increasingly viewed as a more or less official Soviet poet whose protest has become empty and political following the party line.

In prose, Vassily Aksyonov is the one who has drawn the most attention from Western critics. His most important early work A Ticket to the Stars made him known in the USA in 1963. About him Nonna D. Shaw wrote in her review of the novel: "He shares with Evtushenko, Voznesensky, Kazakov, and other Soviet avant-garde poets and writers the fate of being subjected to alternative acclamations and severe criticism."[57] The reviewer stressed Aksyonov's concern with the stiliagi and other rebellious "free spirits:" "Aksyonov believes that the rebelliousness of today's youth in Russia is a natural and salutary phenomenon," as a sign of health and an assurance for the eventual recovery of society from the evils of the past.

However, it was only much later, when Aksyonov's novel The Burn was published in English, that some American and British critics saw the clear affinities between Aksyonov and the Beats. Geoffrey Hosking noted: "The textual disjunctions are derived partly from modern American fiction, partly from such native models as Andrei Bely and Evgeny Zamyatin;" and about the translation: "Michael Glenny has done an excellent job, recapturing the Beat jargon of the 1960s with a conviction that will awaken nostalgia on both sides of the Atlantic."[58] The reviewer from the British newspaper The Guardian, Carol Rumens agreed:

> Though related to the best of the "Beat" writing of this period, to Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and even to the Voznesensky of Anti-Worlds, it has a scope that goes beyond individual soul-searching.[59]

Looking into the more scholarly Western studies of Soviet Russian literature since Stalin one cannot help being surprised by the lack of comparative approaches. They all discuss the Thaw at length, the poetry renaissance and the young prose, but, as we shall see, only very few have seen the young poets and writers as part of a broader artistic, social, or even cultural movement; and nobody has seen the parallel to what happened in Western, notably American literature -- except maybe Thim Pogachar, who in his paper "Vassily Aksyonov and the American Counterculture" drew some parallels to the Beat Generation.[60]

Max Hayward used the term "new wave" in an article, but he did not explain it, except by applying it to the short prose of Tendriakov, Nagibin, Kazakov, Aksyonov and Gladilin.[61] In another article it became clear that he simply saw the young prose writers as belonging to the Thaw.[62] Marc Slonim, who applied the term "new wave" to the poets, preferred the term "avant-garde" to describe the whole young, artistic scene. He included Nagibin, Kazakov, Aksyonov, Akhmadulina, Evtushenko, Voznesensky, Okudzhava, Iaroslav Smeliakov, Robert Rozhdestvenskii, Viktor Sosnora, Novella Matveeva, and many beginners in the "new school:"

> Together with painters and sculptors such as Radin, Zverev and Neizvestny (nov an *emigre*); musicians such as Volkonsky (nov an *emigre*); and dancers, actors, and theatrical or cinematographic producers, they form the lively and evergrowing artistic avant-garde.[63]

Edward J. Brown spoke of a "new movement," including a lot of names, but the term remained vague and undefined. Brown, certainly,did see a parallel to American literature but only in the sense of influence from Hemingway and Salinger.[64]

The influence from Hemingway and Salinger was also stressed by Deming Brown when discussing the poets and writers of the New Wave:

> The quality and extent of Western influence on these young writers needs to be thoroughly investigated .... but for the moment one can mention with assurance two Americans: Ernest Hemingway and J.D. Salinger.[65]

Generally speaking, the American reviewers of the New Wave have been very reluctant to see it as a parallel to the Beat Generation, or even to see the Russian poets and writers as one group. Instead they have been very eager to discuss the possible influence from Americans like Hemingway and Salinger. But the degree of opposition to the Soviet regime seems always to have been in the center of American criticism of Soviet literature.

Deming Brown, however, came close to a description of the Beat protagonists, when writing about the heroes of the Soviet "Youth movement:"

> As a rule the protagonists were young persons of urban origin, reluctant, at least for the moment, to enter the paths that society had charted for them and trying to work out ethical standards to replace the outworn or suspect ones. Frequently the center figure was a person troubled by moral doubts, uncertain of his role in life, puzzled and concerned about the future, socially disoriented and, in some degree, psychologically bemused. Older heroes among them, usually in their twenties or early thirties, appeared as wanderers and drifters, dislocated and lonely, lacking permanent ties and unwilling to make a firm and stable life commitment.[66]

2.4.4. Soviet Reception of the Beat Generation.

The question as to whether or not Salinger did influence Russian writers has also been discussed by Soviet critics. And it is important to notice that Salinger is often, more or less, seen as belonging to the Beat Generation or, at least, to the same tendency. Salinger was, indeed, very popular in the Soviet Union after the publication of The Catcher in the Rye in Russian in 1960. It was met by almost "edinodushnoe odobrenie" (unnanimous approval) by the Soviet critics.[67]

The "real" Beats were not nearly as successful as Salinger. Very little Beat writing has been translated or published in the Soviet Union. Probably the first poem in translation was Ferlinghetti's "Dog" (1959),[68] followed by Ginsberg's "A Supermarket in California" (1961). In 1966 Inostrannaia literatura (Foreign literature) published a number of supposedly representative American poets, introduced and translated by the

Beat Generation's most active agitator in Russia, Andrei Sergeev, who is considered Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti's official translator. He included Ginsberg's "My Morning Song" and "Sunflower Sutra." In 1970 Ferlinghetti had several poems published in Innostrannaia literatura (Foreign Literature) and New World, and in 1971 Voznesensky's translation of a long poem by Ginsberg appeared in Literaturnaia gazeta (Literary Gazette). As late as in 1975 Sergeev, Boris Slutskii, A. Zverev, and I. Levidova published a remarkable and rare collection Sovremennaia amerikanskaia poeziia (Contemporary American Poetry), containing fifty poets. In this collection Ginsberg was represented by ten poems, Corso by two, and Ferlinghetti by five.

In prose Kerouac is the only one of the "real" Beats who was published in the Soviet Union. In 1960 three excerpts from On the Road were published in Inostrannaia literatura. And fifteen years later another small piece "The Road to Mexico City" was included in a collection of stories.

Deming Brown has studied the changing Soviet Attitudes Toward American Writing (1962). In the chapter "From 1955 to 1960" he wrote that a typical practice of publishing American literature was to print anthologies of stories, "all concentrating on a particular aspect of American life and painting it in the gloomiest colors."[69] As we have seen, the Americans have had the same attitude toward Soviet writing, always stressing literary opposition to the Soviet system. However, Brown admitted that improvements were made in the late 50s when "a new restraint, subtlety, and regard for literary values had become evident." He pointed out that the publication of excerpts from On the Road and the entire text of The Catcher in the Rye in 1960 were startling examples of this. Furthermore Brown writes:

> The phenomenon of the "beat generation" began to attract increasing attention from Soviet critics, who considered the beatniks mildly lunatic but nevertheless lauded their refutation of "farcical bourgeois morality."[70]

The articles that thus appeared in the Soviet press dealing with the Beat Generation often had sensational titles like "The Lords of the Dollar" and "A Generation Without Youth" or "The Tragedy of a Young Generation." But there is no doubt that the Russians paid far more attention to the Beat Generation than the Americans ever did to the New Wave or to Soviet literature in general.

Generally speaking, the Soviet critics paid by far more attention to the social and political side of the phenomenon than to the aesthetic side. One the one hand, they welcomed the social protest of the Beats as a convenient tool in the ongoing propaganda campaign against the West; on the other hand, the attitudes and moral outlook of the Beats were as far removed from the official ideals of "progressive Soviet Youth" as possible, which is why most critics, like M. Tugusheva, put much effort into explaining that:

> the "Beat Generation" is an exclusively American phenomenon. Its representatives are clearly far from politics. Their philosophy is extremely eclectic and is a dissonant combination of such heterogenous elements as anarchism, exsistentialism, Freudianism.[71]

R. Orlova writes:

> To Soviet boys and girls the world depicted by the Beatniks would seem horrible and disgusting [...] The Beatniks are endlessly far from our way of life. Their basic ideas about the present and the future, and their way of life and manner of writing, all that is deeply alien to the Soviet youth. But one must not for a second forget the main thing in this connection: the members of the "Beat Generation" are victims of the capitalist reality, they do not accept this reality, they are against war and against the world of the businessmen.[72]

Orlova's article was, by the way, a very curious example of Soviet criticism. Apparently she took it for granted that the American literary system works in the same way as the Soviet one, imposing certain rules on the writers. She even applied the Socialist Realist categories -- *partiinost'* (party-mindedness), positive hero, optimism, social demand[73]-- in each case as the opposite of the Soviet definition. *Partiinost'*, for example, was supposed to mean "loyalty to big money interests:"

> Immediately after the end of the Second World War the reactionary criticism at once began demanding a whitewash of the businessmen and the creation of an image of a positive stock-broker.[74]

And when describing the literature that the Beats reacted against, whereby they became "revolutionary heroes", she employed the categories of "embellishing" and "optimism:" "They [the Beats] oppose the false dollar-worshippers, the official pseudo-optimistic literature imposed from above."[75]

In this way Orlova has, in fact, unwittingly, provided a very true picture of the situation in her own country, one needs only substitute "they" with "the New Wave," and "dollar-worshippers" with "official Soviet writers."

So it is no wonder that almost none of the Soviet critics saw any parallels between the Beat Generation and the New Wave. However, when it came to assessments of individual American writers and poets in more scholarly studies the criticism was much less political.

Ia. N. Zasurskii, author of Amerikanskaia literatura XX veka (American Literature in the Twentieth Century) did not like the prose of the Beat Generation, e.g. Kerouac and especially Burroughs, whose novel Naked Lunch he simply called "pornographic;" but he appreciated that the poets, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and Corso, expressed a protest against conformism with "impressive talent."[76] Iu. Ia. Lidskii was more sympathetic with regard to Kerouac, but, in spite of the writer's indisputable talent, he failed, according to Lidskii, because of his "retreat from realism."[77]

The same criticism -- that the Beats left realism in favour of modernism -- was found in A.M. Zverev's articles on American literature. Recognizing the Beats' genuine, but subjective, protest against American society, Zverev hurried on:

> already in the very begining of the 60s their movement was hit by a crisis, which they could not get over .... Their books turned out to be defenseless against the penetration of modernist devices, drawn from the arsenal of Dadaism, Surrealism, and Expressionism, and from such different writers as Cummings, Gertrude Stein, and Henry Miller.[78]

Zverev, who praised On the Road and "Howl," was very skeptical about Kerouac's and Ginsberg's turning to modernism. It must be stressed that "modernism" is a term used by Soviet critics to denote all "decadent," "formalistic," "experimental," "bourgeois" literature, and is seen as a major threat to Socialist Realism. Nevertheless, Zverev had much praise for Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and Corso, for doing the groundwork for the protest literature of the 60's, but not for McClure, Peter Orlovsky, and Snyder, whom he dismissed as a "passing phenomenon."[79]

E.E. Oshin'sh drew the same conclusion, that Kerouac, in spite of his "romantic pathos" and "some realistic elements," was a modernist.[80]

I. Levidova's fine article "Restless Souls" constituted a liberal and detailed analysis of the protagonists of Salinger, Kerouac, Capote, and Connell. The author showed a rare, undogmatic insight into American culture, and her conclusions with regard to Kerouac in many ways opposed the typical Soviet and American view of the writer:

> Jack Kerouac is interesting to the reader .... as a brilliant artist, endowed with

> great temperament, fine eye and ear, a deep lyrical feeling of the space and endless diversity of his country, which he, of course, loves very much, although he hates its official "face".[81]

Most critics, however, viewed Kerouac as a decadent, immoral modernist, whose protest was empty because he did not have any progressive ideology; as A. Elistratova said:

> Thus, the novel [On the Road] is made as some kind of apology for irresponsibility taken to the limit. A triumphant, irresponsible, cynical individualism is being put on a pedestal.[82]

The most sober article about the poetry of the Beat Generation was also written by I. Levidova. About Ferlinghetti she wrote:

> But the most pleasant color on his palette is irony, which is burning, rude, not timid, with the sharpness of a poster and even with a clear political address;

about Corso:

> Of course, his romanticism is deeply contemporary, the rhythms and images of modern America fill Corso's works, he has a wonderful feeling of the elements of everyday life, he readily and angrily parodies the banalities of the generally accepted;

and about Ginsberg:

> In the best poems by Ginsberg one senses a rare dramatical force, one cannot stay indifferent to his revelations of human pain, one is pleased by the festive greediness of his eye and ear and the spiritual openness of the poet.[83]

In general, the Soviet critics have been more open to the poets of the Beat Generation than to the writers; even a very "modernist" poet like McClure has been called a "fine lyricist" and had a small piece of a poem published in the Literary Gazette.[84]

By and large, the bulk of Soviet criticism has favoured the Beat's protest against capitalist society, but rejected their "subjectivity," "decadence," "modernism," and "lack of progressive political ideology;" although some critics, representatives of the new liberal outlook of the 50s - 60s, have delivered constructive assessments of individual poets and writers. And the existence of this kind of criticism in the Soviet Union is, we think, hardly recognized in the West.

Summing up this survey of mutual criticism, we can conclude that both sides have welcomed the oppositional aspects of the phenomenon in the "other camp," and this must, probably, be seen in the light of the stereotype images they have of each other, and of the ungoing ideological struggle between the two super-powers. None of the sides have been willing to admit any basic affinities between the two movements, instead the criticism, usually of the conservative and dogmatic kind, has been an instrument in the propaganda campaign. This has, of course, been most clear in the Soviet Union, where the reviews have often been ridiculously and absurdly subjective and propagandistic, but the tendency was also found among the Americans.

2.5. THEMATICAL FIELDS.

In describing the socio-political environment in which the two movements occured, the histories of the two movements, and the reaction from the 'official' world, we hope to have documented the carnivalistic, subcultural spirit which surrounded both of them.In order to establish whether or not the two movements can be seen as related phenomena, we must now turn to a comparative analysis of the actual texts they produced. Based on the interviews and the discussion in Part II, we define three major thematic fields, to be investigated through analyses of representative texts:.

1. **Carnival and subculture -- the nature of the revolt.**
2. **The quest.**
3. **Prose as revelation of self and vision. / Poets as prophets and performers.**

Footnotes: Part Two

2.1. The socio-political background

1. 1945: the USSR annexes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and parts of Poland, Finland and Rumania; 1945-48: Poland, DDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania become Soviet satellites; 1948: The USSR isolates West Berlin; 1949 the creation of NATO and the COMECON; 1949: communist coup in China; 1950: the Corean war begins; 1951: the USA intervene in the revolt in Iran; 1953: East Berlin revolt crushed by the USSR; 1954: the CIA supports a military takeover in Guatamala and the USA intervene in Vietnam; 1956: The Suez crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and the Polish revolt; 1958: the USA send troops to Lebanon, the Berlin crisis; 1959: Castro seizes power in Cuba; 1960: the U2 affair; 1961: the second Berlin crisis and the Bay of Pigs Invasion; 1962: the Cuban crisis, and the coup in Congo; 1964: the USA become deeply involved in Vietnam; 1965: the US invasion of Dominica; 1967: war between Israel and Egypt; 1968: Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia......

2. A. LaVerne Peterson, McCarthyism: Its Ideology and Foundation, unpublished dissertation, (University of Minnesota: 1962), 301.

3. Miller, D., and M. Nowak, The Fifties: The Way We Really Were, (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 26.

4. In this comparison Peterson considers eight such "methods": **a.** contempt for the law; **b.** bluff and diversionary gambit; **c.** intimidation; **d.** guilt by association; **e.** unfounded charge of treason; **f.** multiple untruth; **g.** abuse of documents; **h.** the means being the ends; see McCarthyism, op. cit., 104 and on.

5. Ibid., 293.

6. A.B. Ulam, A History of Soviet Russia, (New York: Praeger,1976), 219.

7. Ibid., 221.

8. St. F. Cohen, "The Friends and Foes of Change: Reformism and Conservatism in the Soviet Union", in The Soviet Union Since Stalin, edited by St. Cohen, A. Rabinowitch, and R. Scharlet, (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1980) 18.

9. A well-known Soviet anecdote goes like this: A train is making its way through Russia. Suddenly it stops and the engineer comes into a compartment: "Comrade Lenin, the Whites have removed the rails, what do we do?" Lenin rolls up his sleeves: "Comrades, we must all work together and get those rails back in place". Soon the train is on its way again. After a while the train comes to a halt again, the engineer comes storming into the compartment: "Comrade Stalin, the counter-revolutionaries have destroyed the rails, what do we do?" Without hesitation, Stalin exclaims: "There are traitors among us. Shoot half the passengers, dress up the other half in prison suits and make them work hard!". Soon the train is on its way again. After a while the train stops again and again the engineer comes running: "Comrade Brezhnev, strange as it may sound,

anti-Soviet provocateurs and imperialists have once again blocked the road, what do we do?" "It's a serious situation", says Brezhnev, "but we'll manage that as well. Draw the curtains in all compartments and make sure to shake the train once in a while - then everybody will think we're on the way.

10. N.S. Khrushchev, The Secret Speech, introduced by Zhores and Roy Medvedev, translated by T. Deutcher, (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1976), 20.

11. See Inger Thorup Lauridsen and Per Dalgård, "Interv'iu s Ernstom Neizvestnym", Russian Language Journal, 136-137, (1986), 123.

12. P. Sorokin, Russia and the United States, (New York: Dutton 1944), 27.

13. E. Fromm, May Man Prevail? An Inquiry Into the Facts and Fictions of Foreign Policy, (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 22.

14. A. Werth, The Khrushchev Phase: The Soviet Union Enters the 'Decisive' Sixties, (London: Hale,1961), 105-116.

15. Hollander, P., Soviet and American Society: A Comparison, (New York: Harward U. Press, 1973), 123.

16. V. Aksyonov, The Burn, translated by Michael Glenny, (New York: Random House, 1984) 59.

17. A. G. Meyer, "Theories of convergence," in Change in Communist Systems, edited by Ch. Johnson, (Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1970), 329-330.

18. Ibid., 330.

2.2. Subculture and the "one-dimensional" society.

1. W. Whyte, , The Organization Man,(New York: Simon & Shuster, 1956); Wright Mills, C., White Collar, (New York: Oxf. U. Press,1951); Riesman, D., The Lonely Crowd, (New Haven: Yale U. Press,1950), etc.

2. E. Fromm, The Sane Society, (New York: Rhinehart, 1956).

3. "stiliazhestvo" -- trend among Soviet youth of the fifties; the "stiliagi" expressed their non-conformist attitudes through their western tastes and lifestyle.

4. A. Sakharov, Razmyshleniia o progresse i mirnom sosushchestvovanii i intellektual'noi svobode, (Frankfurt: Posev, 1968), 27-35.

5. J. Kerouac, On the Road: Text and Criticism, edited by S. Donaldson, (New York: Viking, 1979), 238.

6. V. Aksenov, A Ticket to the Stars, translated by A.R. MacAndrew, (New York: Signet, 1963), 20-21.

7. H. Marcuse, One Dimensional Man, (Boston: Beacon, 1964), 52.

8. Ibid., 51-52.

9. H. Marcuse, An Essay On Liberation, (Boston: Beacon, 1969), 85.

10. Marcuse, One Dimensional, op. cit., 7.

11. Ibid., 57.

12. Ibid., 59.

13. Ibid., 59.

14. Ibid., 68.

15. Ibid., 76.

16. Ibid., 59.

17. Marcuse, An Essay, op. cit., 23-24.

18. Ibid., 25.

19. Ibid., 25-26.

20. Ibid., 39.

21 M. Bakhtin, Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable i narodnaia kul'tura Srednevekov'ia i Renessansa, (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1965), 8.

22. B.M. Berger, Looking For Amerika. Essays on Youth, Subcultures and Other American Obsession, (Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1968), 176.

23. Ibid., 14-15.

24. W. Reich, The Function of the Orgasm, (Toronto: Ambassador, 1961), xxiv.

2.3. The histories of the two movements.

1. J. Cl. Holmes, Nothing More to Declare, (London: Dutton, 1968), 107.

2. Ibid., 104.

3. G. Nicosia, "Neal Cassady", in Dictionary of Literature, Biography: Vol 16 -- The Beats: Literary Bohemians in Postwar America, edited by Ann Charters, (Detroit: Gale, 1983), 97.

4. D. Van Ghent, "Comment", in A Casebook on the Beat, edited by T. Parkinson, (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell,1961), 213.

5. text of Ginsberg's postcards announcing the Six Gallery reading, quoted from B. Cook, *The Beat Generation*, (New York: Scribner's, 1973), 63.

6. M. McClure, *Scratching the Beat Surface*, (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982), 13.

7. J. Kramer, *Allen Ginsberg in America*, (New York: Random House,1968), 48.

8. J. Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, (New York: Viking, 1958), 13.

9. Parkinson, T., *A Casebook on The Beat*, op cit., 285.

10. Kerouac, *On the Road*, op. cit., 8.

11. Cook, *The Beat Generation*, op. cit., 4.

12. Holmes, *Nothing More*, op. cit., 136.

13. J. Kerouac, "The Origins of the Beat Generation", in Parkinson, *A Casebook*, op. cit., 76.

14. J. Cl. Holmes, "Unscrewing the Locks", in *The Beats: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Lee Bartlett, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1981), 6.

15. Cook, *The Beat Generation*, op. cit., 125.

16. S. Stepanchev, *American Poetry Since 1945*, (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1965), 166.

17. Holmes, *Nothing More*, op. cit., 115.

18. J. Tytell, *Naked Angels: the Lives & Literature of the Beat Generation*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 3.

19. Cook, *The Beat Generation*, op. cit., 151.

20. D. Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 216; and H. Hertel, ed., *Moderne Slavisk Litteratur*, (Copenhagen: Chr. Eilers Forlag, 1972),16-17.

21. Although the 'theory of conflictlessness' had been publicly discredited already in 1952.

22. I. Erenburg, "On the work of the writer", *Znamia*, 10, (Moscow: 1953); V. Pomerantsev, "On sincerity in literature", *Novyi mir*, 12, (Moscow: 1953).

23. Møller, P.U., "Sovjetrussisk litteratur", in Hertel, *Moderne Slavisk Litteratur*, op. cit., 49.

24. P. Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962-1964*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965), 105.

25. Ibid., 148-86.

26. See E. Mozejko, Den Socialistiske Realisme, (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1978), 191-202.

27. Gladilin, A., The Making and Unmaking of a Soviet Writer: My Story of the "Young Prose" of the Sixties and After, translated by David Lapeza, (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 23.

28. Ibid., 13.

29. Belova, I., "Pokolenie utrativshee svoikh prozaikov", Sintaksis, 11, (Paris: 1982), 79

30. V. Aksyonov, The Burn, op. cit., 34.

31. A. Soprovskii, "Konets prekrasnoi epokhi", Kontinent, 352.

32. A. Voznesensky, Selected Poems of Andrey Voznesensky, translated by Anselm Hollo, (New York: Grove Press, 1964).

33. P. Vail' and A. Genis, Sovremennaia russkaia literatura, (Ann Arbor: Hermitage, 1982), 77-79.

34. V. Aksenov, "Molodye o sebe", Voprosy literatury, 9, (Moscow: 1962), 118.

35. V. Aksenov, "Kruglye sutki, non-stop", Novyi mir, 6, (Moscow: 1976), 117.

36. H. Marshall, "The Poet in Russia", in A. Voznesensky, Selected Poems, translated by H. Marshal, (London: 1966),xiv.

37. A. Gladilin, The Making and, op. cit., 78.

38. V. Aksenov, Ozhog, (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1980), 29. Our translation.

39. The Soviet dictionary Novye slova i znachenija (new words and meanings), edited by N.Z. Kotelovaia and Iu.S. Sorokin, (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1971), 79, gives a definition of "bitnik" which reflects neither the Soviet nor the Western use of the word: "Representative of a post-war spontaneous, anarchist protest movement among young people (mainly in the USA and Great Britain), protesting against bourgeois morality by breaking all norms of social existence."

40. R. Milner-Gulland, "Introduction", in Yevgenii Yevtushenko, Selected Poetry, edited by R. Milner-Gulland, (London: Pergamon Press, 1963), vii..

41. R. Sarnov, Rifmuetsia s pravdoi, , (Moscow: 1967), 314.

42. K. Kuzminskii, ed., The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry, Vol 1,(Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1980), 553.

43. J.E. Bowlt, "Introduction", in *The Blue Lagoon*, op. cit.,16-17.

44. Aksenov, "Kruglye sutki", op. cit., 82.

2.4 Reception

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2. N. Mailer, "The White Negro", in *Advertisement For Myself*, (New York: Putnam & Sons, 1959), 342.

3. Rexroth, K., "Disengagement: The Art of the Beat Generation", in Parkinson, *A Casebook*, op. cit., 179.

4. Ibid., 193.

5. See for instance F.A. Butler, "On the Beat Nature of Beat", *American Scholar*, 30, (Winter 1960-61), 79-92; J.G. Roberts, "The Frisco Beat", *Mainstream*, 11 (July, 1958), 11-26; W. J. Smith, "Hipcats to Hipsters", *New Republic*, 138, April 21, (1958), 18-20; John Cl. Holmes, *Nothing More to Declare*, (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1967); L. Lipton, *The Holy Babarians*, (New York: Julian Messner, 1959); S. Krim, *Shake It for the World, Smartass*, (New York: Dial Press, 1970), and many others.

6. M.Y. Lin, *Children of Adam: Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti and Snyder*, unpublished dissertation, (1973), 68.

7. I. Erenburg, *Liudi, Gody, Zhizn'*, *Sobranie sochineniia v 9 tomakh*, 9, (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura,1967), 767.

8. V. Kataev, "Voznesenskii", from *Sobranie Sochineniia*, 8, (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1971),440.

9. P. Antokol'skii, "Bella Akhmadulina", *Sobranie sochineniia*, 4, (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1973); K. Paustovskii, "Bessspornye i spornye mysli", *Rasskazy -- Ocherki i publitsistika -- Stat'i i vystupleniia*, (Moscow: Khud. lit., 1972).

10. E. Evtushenko, "O dvukh poeticheskikh pokoleniiakh", *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Dec. 1, (Moscow: 1955), 3.

11. Iu. Surovtsev, "Chetvertoe pokolenie", *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 21, (Moscow: 1956).

12. Vl. Soloukhin, "Bez chetkikh pozitsii", *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Apr. 8, (Moscow: 1968), 3.

13. L. Oshanin, "Poet i chitatel'", 2-3, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 7, (Moscow:

1958), 2-3.

14. K. Zelinskii, "O poezii nashego veka", Literaturnaia gazeta, September 13, (Moscow: 1958),3 and 6.

15. V. Druzin, "O sovremennoi molodoi poezii", Neva, 5, (Leningrad: 1961), 182-189.

16. V. Rumin, "Spor neobkhodimo prodolzhit'", Novyi mir,11, (Moscow: 1960), 195-219.

17. A. Men'shutin and A. Siniavskii, "Za poeticheskuiu aktivnost' (zametki o poezii molodykh)", Novyi mir, 1, (Moscow: 1961), 225.

18. Ibid., 224.

19. Ibid., 235.

20. N. Korzhavin, "V zashchitu banal'nykh istin", Novyi mir, 3, (Moscow: 1961), 234-46.

21. L. Anninskii, "Zametki o molodoi poezii", Znamiia, 9, (Moscow: 1961), 196-212.

22. B. Solov'ev, "Legkii nesesser i tiazhelaia klad'", Oktiabr', 6, (Moscow: 1961), 179-193.

23. L. Kriachko, "Nabliudatel' ili uchastnik?", Oktiabr', 1, (Moscow: 1962), 209-216.

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PART THREE

The Prose of the Beat Generation and the New Wave.

(By Per Dalgård)

3.0. INTRODUCTION

My aim here is to prove that the similarities between the Beat Generation and the New Wave do not only exist in the words of the writers involved and in our imagination, but that they constitute an essential part of the literary universe of the Beat Generation and the New Wave. This would, in turn, be another sign of the common nature of the two movements.

The aim dictates the methodological approach to the material, in this case a thematical approach, rather than a chronological or a writer- by -writer approach. This implies:

1. Selecting works or parts of works from a huge body of texts;

2. Running the risk of confusing the reader.

In selecting the texts for analysis, I have kept in mind that we are basically dealing with the early periods of the movements (when the fundamental concepts were being established). Thus, I have generally chosen early works, except in cases, like Aksyonov's The Burn, where later works deal with the movement.

'Selecting', however, also means 'leaving out'. I have left out several works by Kerouac, Holmes, Bitov, Gladilin and Aksyonov; I have even left some writers all together: William Burroughs' novels and the prose of Corso and Ferlinghetti will be mentioned but not analyzed, because, as is generally accepted, Jack Kerouac's whole line of novels (On the Road in particular) constitutes the typical Beat writing and provides all the essentials of Beat prose.

Generally speaking, I have selected according to what was the minimal proof needed in order to prove a point. Had I not done so, the analyses would have been endless, due to the huge body of material involved.

The reader who is not familiar with all the texts could be confused by the thematical approach, which implies jumping from one text to another. I have tried to avoid this, as much as possible, by using as few examples as possible and by staying with one text as long as possible.

Finally, I would like to stress that it is not the goal of this dissertation to say anything essentially new about the Beat Generation, but about the New Wave. The texts of the Beat Generation are used as points of departure for comparison with texts of the New Wave. The New Wave is the basic object of this study.

3.1. CARNIVAL AND SUBCULTURE: THE NATURE OF THE REVOLT

3.1.0. "Jeans Prose" and the Conflict Between Generations.

3.1.0.1. Salinger and Kerouac -- In the same year that Kerouac finished On the Road, J.D. Salinger published The Catcher in the Rye, which became one of the most famous novels of modern American literature. As mentioned earlier, many Soviet critics viewed Kerouac and Salinger as belonging to the same trend in American literature (although Kerouac was too obscene to publish in the USSR) and, indeed, they do exhibit a great number of similarities.

Salinger did not belong to the Beat Generation -- not even as an associated writer -- as a matter of fact, he has never associated himself with any literary trend or movement. He has deliberately avoided any kind of publicity which is in a striking contrast to Kerouac's yearning for publicity. But Salinger did share several fundamental features with Kerouac and the Beats: the rebellious young hero, the journey as a sign of the heroes' quest, reliance on colloquial speech (including urban slang), some of the attitudes towards society, the interest in Buddhism, and the passion for a lost innocent childhood.

Strangely enough, only few American critics have noticed, let alone, discussed the close affinities between Salinger and Kerouac. And when somebody has noticed this, it has usually been in a very critical vein, like Leslie Fiedler:

> Recently a group of writers in their late youth and early middle age have apppeared ... They think they are emulating Huck Finn, though in reality their model is Tom Sawyer ... Such writers range all the way from a suburban, upper-middle-class wing represented by Salinger and his image Holden Caulfield to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac with their transparent, not-quite-fictional representations of themselves.[1]

Dan Wakefield admits that on the surface the two authors seem alike but he sarcastically dismisses the Beats as moral seniles whose search has ended "not with love but with heroin:"

> Sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield was (just like Jack Kerouac) sickened by the material values and the inhumanity of the world around him. That sickness,

> however, marked the beginning and not the end of the search of Salinger's characters to find an order of morality and a possibility of love within the world.[2]

Robert A. Hipkiss -- the author of the most comprehensive comparison between Kerouac and Salinger -- is more sympathetic. He sees Kerouac and the Beats as part of a broader Romantic movement in post World War II American letters which includes Salinger, James Purdy, John Knowles, and Ken Kesey and others. Basically this movement has:

> signified the refusal of youth to accept the limited role assigned to it by an adult middle class that bequeathed it a political legacy of atomic warfare, wars of containment, and cold-war purges in the name of patriotism.[3]

And Hipkiss clearly sees Kerouac's rejection of society and his "prophetic sense of doom" as total: "Kerouac's apocalyptic vision is more steadfastly dreadful and uncompromising than that of any writer in this period."[4]

Comparing Kerouac and Salinger Hipkiss writes that the characters of both writers are always caught between the 'phony' world of reality and the 'nice' world they would prefer to live in, however, he continues: "in Salinger the 'phony' world is eventually dealt with, whereas in Kerouac it is always rejected in favor of the ideal vision."[5] In all points of comparison, Hipkiss finds that Kerouac is more radical than Salinger: in Kerouac we do not find a "spokesman for growth and maturity" as in Salinger; Kerouac rejects the Zen Buddhist compromise with the active world, that Salinger accepts; Kerouac does not believe in the possibility of love and the return to an innocent childhood like Salinger does; where Kerouac's characters slip into mysticism, Salinger's learn to assume an adult responsibility for the "preservation of an intuitive, aware and loving response to life." And with regard to style: Salinger is exact, detached and ironic whereas Kerouac tries to "get it all in," he is deeply involved and without irony. In the words of Hipkiss, they share a "distrust of logic and sanity's use of words for communication," but in Salinger the beatific signals are "most often between individuals; in Kerouac they are more often emanations of God in the abstract."[6]

What the difference all boils down to is, apparently, the degree of rejection, that is, that Kerouac was more comprehensive in his rejection. This is, I think, not completely true, but here it must be stressed that Kerouac's attitude toward society and its institutions was that of "love-hatred." After all, he too wrote nostalgic pieces about the family and the old values of American society (for instance in The Town and the City and Maggie Cassady).

Despite their differences, Kerouac and Salinger have enough in common for us to suggest that they belong (at least part of their oeuvres) to the same trend -- a trend which has been named "Jeans Prose" by the Yugoslavian scholar Aleksandar Flaker.

Flaker sums up the main elements of the Jeans Prose paradigma stressing that:

> ...Salingers Fänger im Roggen in erster Linie durch Aksĕnovs und in neuester Zeit auch durch Plenzdorfs Verdienst zum Paradigma des Prosatypus geworden ist, den wir hier "Jeans-Prosa" genannt haben. In ihm kommen am klarsten jene Struktureigenheiten zum Ausdruck, auf denen dieser Typus beruht: die Opposition der Welt der Jungen und der Welt der Erwachsenen, ein neuer Erzählertypus, auf den eine solche Opposition aufbaut und der in die Prosa eine Gegenüberstellung zweier Sprachen als Opposition zweier Welten einführt ...; die Annäherung der Sprache des Erzählers an die spontane mündliche Rede auf der Ebene des Bewußtseins des Erzählers über das eigene Erzählen mit ausgeprägt urbaner ziwilisationsgebundener Stilematik; die ironisch-parodistische Einstellung zu den vorgefundenen Werten der kulturellen Strukturen; schließlich auch das Streben nach einer Mythologisierung des jugendlichen Nonkonformismus.[7]

In addition to Salinger and Aksyonov, Flaker includes Gladilin and Kuznetsov (USSR), U. Plenzdorf (DDR), M. Hlasko (Poland), some of the British "Angry Young Men," and Kerouac.[8] Flaker deals mainly with Plenzdorf's Die Neuen Leiden des jungen W (1971) but at the same time he outlines the basic structural features of Jeans Prose. I suggest that these structural features can also be applied to both Salinger, the New Wave and partly to Kerouac and the Beat Generation. According to Flaker, the basis of the revolt expressed in Jeans Prose is the conflict between generations -- not in the Turgenevian sense of a "fathers and sons" conflict -- as a fundamental revolt of a young protagonist against the whole official world. Flaker describes this conflict in terms of three oppositions:

a. I <-> THEY: I, the young rebel and often also his clique against society and its institutions (family, school, police, work, the political system etc.).

b. Our language <-> Their language: the spontaneous street language of the young (colloquial, jargon) against the stereotype official language as spoken in school, in newspapers, by politicians etc.

c. Our culture <-> Their Culture: the culture of the protagonists which includes "jeans," rock'n'roll, jazz, movies, literature, against the accepted "grown-up" culture.

The oppositions result in: 1. a conflict often with tragic outcome -- the hero "dies" either literally or by conforming to the demands of society; or in 2. evasion: the hero escapes society into a world of his own by living as a "subterreanean" or by travelling. Evasion can be in space (the journey) or it can be social evasion, by which the hero is placed in an environment which is already in opposition to society.[9]

3.1.0.2. Kerouac and "Jeans Prose" -- The Town and the City (1950) was a very ambitious project of the young Kerouac. In this 500 page novel he wanted to write a traditional family saga. It was met with sympathy by the critics but never became the breakthrough that Kerouac had counted on. And, indeed, it does not exhibit the same depth of inspiration and the same intensity as On the Road.

The novel tells the story of the Martin family from the early part of the century to the years after WW II. During this period George Martin (the father), his wife, and some of their three daughters and five sons move to New York from a secure life in Galloway (Lowel, New England). The family has been spread by depression and war, and only the death of George Martin can bring it together, if only for a brief reunion after which they all part. It is largely an autobiographical novel, and the character which resembles Kerouac the most is the son Peter Martin, although his brothers Joe and Francis have some of Kerouac's characteristics too. One might say that Kerouac has attempted to divide his personality into at least three parts or "selves": the curious and sensitive observer (Peter), the restless wanderer (Joe), the intellectual (Francis). Nevertheless, Peter is the main character and the author's voice in the novel.

In the rebellious character of Peter the Flakerian conflict is clearly present. And although the novel tends to present a nostalgic and rather sentimental view of childhood, family and the values of old-time America, it shows at the same time how these values have disintegrated. Peter fails school, his football career, love, and in New York he gets involved in a subcultural millieu of hipsters, artists (among whom we recognize Ginsberg, Burroughs, and other of Kerouac's Beat friends), drug addicts, and petty criminals. Here the mad poet Leon Levinsky (Ginsberg) outlines his apocalyptic vision to him:

> Everybody is going to fall apart, disintegrate, all character-structures based on tradition and uprightness and so-called morality will slowly rot away, people will get their hives right on their hearts, great crabs will cling to their brains .... You'll see great tycoons of industry suddenly falling apart and going mad, you'll see preachers at the pulpit suddenly exploding -- there'll be marijuana fumes seeping out of the Stock Exchange. College professors will suddenly go cross-eyed and start showing their behinds to one another.[10]

And it is Peter's involvement in this millieu that causes the "father-son" conflict to break out. George Martin gets acquainted with Peter's new friends and is appalled. The long dialogue between father and son is a meticulous record "of two people totally refusing to recognize the premises of each others' argument. As such, Peter and his father become not only respective types of youth versus old age, but also representatives of the twentieth century."[11]

George Martin attacks the lack of morals and values of the new generation: "this generation knows right and wrong, they sense it all right and that's probably why they do so many crazy things, like those friends of yours. It makes them jumpy and neurotic. But they don't believe in right and wrong."[12] And he insists that they have no sincere hopes and that their "great philosophy" comes from the European emigrants who bring their intellectual theories of culture and want to change everything. He opposes this to the good values of old time America (his American dream): hard labour, family, and church: "... that's the best life there is. They work hard all right, but they get rewarded, they live and they're happy and healthy, and they're independent."[13]

Peter, typically enough, is unable to explain and defend his position, because he himself is not sure of it: "So, I drink, all right, I have my reasons! What's the great thing we're supposed to be living for anyway? What's the great faith, hope and charity of the age that's been dumped on our heads ..."[14] The discussion leads nowhere and when Peter walks home he:

> recalled sorrowfully that when the child grew up and sought advice he got only fumbling earnest human words, when the child sought a way of some sort he only found that his father's way was not enough, and the child was left cold with the realization that nobody, not even his father, really knew what to do. And yet, that children and fathers should have a notion in their souls that there must be a way, an authority, a great knowledge, a vision, a view of life, a proper manner, an order in all disorder and sadness of the world -- that alone must be God in men.[15]

The father-son conflict is resolved by evasion, both in the form of social evasion (Peter now belongs to the New York subculture) and evasion in space. Early in the novel the restlessness of the children -- their urge to escape -- is indicated when they run away from home along the river, and later by the wild truck-drive of Joe (who in many ways resembles Dean Moriarty from On The Road) -- the most restless and wild of the brothers, a thing the narrator ascribes to many other young American men as well:

> A kind of lyrical ecstasy possesses certain young Americans in the springtime, a feeling of not belonging in any one place or in any one moment, a wild restless longing to be elsewhere, everywhere, right now! The air is balmy and springlike, redolent with so many musics from everywhere, everything seems to describe dizzy circles, there are illimitable thoughts of long spaces and long voyages, it is a strange, maddening but still as yet ecstatic feeling of irresponsible wanderlust of the soul, responding to everything at the moment - "I don't give a damn!"[16]

This is the way Joe feels when he and his friend suddenly set out on a wild drive for several days: "without a second's forethought, Joe and his melancholy wild friend began a mad voyage that was to take them a thousand miles up and down the seaboard and into the middle west, in a truck which was now technically a stolen truck."[18]

At the end of the novel, after his father's death, Peter finds himself:

> on the road again, traveling the continent westward, going off to further and further years, alone by the waters of life, alone, looking towards the light of the rivers' cape, towards tapers burning warmly in the towns, looking down along the shore in remembrance of the dearness of his father and of all life.[18]

The novel, thus, leads directly towards Kerouac's next novel, On the Road, in which evasion in space becomes the focal point (see 3.2.)

In connection with the discussion of The Town & The City as "Jeans Prose" I have deliberately avoided the issues b (language) and c (culture) in Flaker's scheme, because these issues become much clearer in On the Road, to which we shall return shortly. The Town & The City lacks the typical "Jeans Prose" 1st person narrator, that is, a youthful narrator speaking in urban slang and jargon (although the New York section introduces street jargon).

3.1.0.3 The New Wave and Jeans Prose -- In the late 50s - early 60s, Jeans Prose as a trend became extremely popular among young people in the Soviet Union too. And the surprising thing about it is that it was not a matter of influence from Salinger or Kerouac. One has to remember that despite the relative freedom of the Thaw the Soviet Union was nevertheless a closed and strictly controlled society, and that neither Salinger nor Kerouac was known among Soviet writers in the 50s - early 60s. Still, something new was in the air and this newness was soon transformed into literature.

Iurii Kazakov's "Blue and Green" (Goluboe i zelenoe,1956) was one of the first stories to deal with a post WW II urban teenage boy who resembled his western counterparts by being a restless soul, uncertain about his role in life, extremely innocent and sensitive, and interested in western jazz and clothes. The story is about a 17 year old boy who for the first time falls in love. The plot is simple: he meets a girl, Liliia; after some hesitation they fall in love. Slowly they grow apart; and she meets another. Kazakov would probably have ended the story at this point, with the hero in despair -- still uncertain about himself and the future -- had it not been for the Socialist Realist demand for a happy ending and a development towards a positive hero working for the good of society. So, conforming to this demand the writer attaches an ending which obviously is meant to be ironic: A year passes by, the young man forgets about his love and his despair. Now we find him studying hard at the institute, and "nobody is distracting me from the studies, nobody urges me to go for a walk. I'm involved in much social work. I practice swimming and I have even fulfilled the requirements of the first grade."[19] He receives a letter from Liliia in which she informs him of her marriage and asks him to see her off when she and her husband leave for the North where they are going to work. He sees her off and we are told that after that he becomes a happy and active member of society and that he also wants to go somewhere to work.

To the Western reader such a story seems stunningly naive, and even a Russian reader would now, 3o years later, shake his head. However, one has to take the immediate background into account, namely Soviet literature of the 30s and 40s with its Socialist Realist categories of "the positive hero" and "party-mindedness" (partiinost'). Literature was supposed to depict the heroism and soundness of the "New Soviet Man" in order to educate the masses, and, since the revolution had dismantled the class struggle and liquidated all opposition between the bourgeois elements and the proletariat, there could be no conflicts now in society. Consequently there could be no conflict in literature, because literature was at the same time also supposed to "mirror reality". Thus, it had not been possible to show any kind of nonconformity. With the death of

Stalin the rules changed, if only a little.

Soviet "Jeans Prose" of the 50s did focus on a new nonconformist generation which was uncertain about everything, but by and large it still followed the Socialist Realist rules by having the young protagonists turn into good Soviet citizens.

Anatolii Kuznetsov's novel Continuation of a Legend (Prodolzhenie legendy, 1957; Eng. title: The Journey) is an account of the journey of a young man from Moscow to a new construction site in Siberia. In the begining he is a stiliaga, he does not want to start on a higher education or go to work: "I had graduated from the tenth grade, but never in my life had I felt so confused. So helpless. A puppy."[20] So he sets out on a journey to Siberia. On the train and at the construction sites he meets the real people and learns what real work is and this makes him mature. He becomes convinced that the stiliagi are "'a social phenomenon"[21] -- boys and girls who do not earn their own living by honest work. The novel touches on the "phenomenon" of the stiliagi, but it follows the official version, shows everything in black and white.

Still with the appearence of the works of Gladilin and Aksyonov the happy endings became less and less convincing, the young heroes' safe return to conformity less reassuring, and their journeys less straight forward.

3.1.0.4. Gladilin -- Anatolii Gladilin is the writer of the New Wave who has been most underestimated. True, many of his Soviet works now seem naive and some even badly written, but since his emigration to France in 1976 he has proved capable of producing several more profound works of lasting quality such as, for instance, Rehearsal on Friday (Repetitsiia v piatnitsu,1977) and The Big Day of Races (Bol'shoi begovoi den',1983). And when reading some of his early works one gets the impression of a deeply honest, sincere and talented writer whose trouble was that in the Soviet context it was impossible to convey the whole truth. No wonder he considers himself to be the father of Soviet "confessional prose" (see interview) -- honest confession of the inner self became a trademark for him and the other participants of the New Wave. And honesty was probably what urged him to emigrate at the peak of a very productive and promising career in the Soviet Union.

Indeed, Gladilin had been one of the very first to sense and reproduce the new atmosphere among young people. As he told us in our interview with him, he sensed, that the idea of revolt was in vogue with the New Wave too in the 60s when they introduced the slang of the city youth.

Certainly the language of Gladilin's Jeans prose works, such as The Chronicle of the Times of Viktor Podgursky (Khronika vremen Viktora Podgurskogo;1956) was clearly influenced by his stiliagi contemporaries. Although the censors had removed most of the slang and street expressions,[22] we still find such expressions as "korifeii" (guys), "vysokii shtil'" (high style -- meaning: like the grown ups), "iubka" (lit. skirt -- meaning: girl), "predki" (lit. predecessors -- meaning: parents), "uchinit' debosh" (make a scandal), "tsiferblat"(lit. face of a watch -- meaning: face), "kinul svoi kosti" (threw his bones -- meaning: went to), "zhelezno" (lit. of iron -- meaning: great), etc. -- all in line with the second point in Flaker's scheme: our language vs. their language.The title of The Chronicle is meant to be ironical:

> Earlier, they wrote chronicles of kings, and later, after the Revolution, "chronicles of fiery years," or of some other great events. But wouldn't you like to read the chronicle of the times of an ordinary fellow? I mean, look at life as yesterday's high school student, Viktor Podgursky, saw it? I set myself no more grandiose task. I simply wanted to show life as it was. And my characters did not express themselves in fancy literary language, but spoke the living language of the street.[23]

In line with the tendency of the New Wave to stress the importance of individuality, the ironic hero, then, is an "ordinary" character. Viktor is 16 - 17 years old, a stiliaga who has just finished school but failed to be admitted to a higher educational institute. The plot is very simple: Viktor does not know what he wants to do in life except be with Nina, the girl he loves. He does not want to work or to study, so he keeps wandering around the streets of Moscow doing "foolish" things or seeking Nina's company. Nina, however, is an ambitious girl who is studying hard at the institute. She falls in love with a mature man, Oleg, who is Viktor's direct opposite -- ambitious, secure and full of self-esteem. After a period of desperation and agony, Viktor starts pulling himself together and gets a job at a laboratory. Slowly he builds up his self-esteem, and he becomes a successful chess player and a friend of the beautiful Komsomol girl Alia. Like the chess player in Aksyonov's "Pobeda" (Victory), he escapes reality into an imaginary world where he feels intellectually free.

Having found his "path" he again meets Nina, who now wants him back. And we are led to believe that he might take her back but this time on his conditions. It is important to notice, that Viktor does not chose the Komsomol girl but Nina, who, after all, used to be part of his stiliaga gang. And, furthermore, it is his success as a chess player which gives him some self-esteem, not his work -- he is still more or less a stiliaga and he longs for the free life he used to live.

As in almost all Soviet Jeans Prose (and certainly in Beat prose as well), the foundation of everything is male friendship (the stiliaga gang) - not school, work, or parents (Viktor does not even have a father), not even the party. Viktor and his friends in the beginning live in a sort of stiliaga-subculture in Moscow. They look like James Dean:

> He had no hat on, the belt of his dark blue trenchcoat was drawn tight and the collar raised, and he had his hands deep in his pockets.
>
> The man was wearing a buttoned down cowboy shirt. His hair was falling into his face. The hair style of a hooligan.
>
> (He) had on a jacket of such a penetrating blue colour as she had never seen anywhere but in girls' dresses on holidays.[24]

The narrator is clearly sympathetic to the stiliagi, and he interprets their emergence as a result of of the lack of possibilities and the attitudes of society:

> "You don't know how to do anything, - they would tell them in the factory personnel offices, - why should we consider you, when you're joining the army in the spring?" And so, in Moscow, on Gorkii street, bunches of colourfully dressed young people began to appear -- stiliagi killing time around the restaurants and bars. The groups of "guys" with their caps drawn down to the eyes and their collars raised, that were hanging out every day in the dark stairways, were quickly fortified with new cadres.[25]

Viktor, Dimka and Len'ka circulate around the Arbat area, where they know everything and everybody. They know:

> when "crazy Kolia" would pass by on his bike which had a steering wheel from a bus instead of handlebars and a horn that frightened even the policemen. They knew the ever drunk Vania ... They even knew where "the Queen of Spades" -- a tall haggard old lady with a prerevolutionary purse -- lived ... But they did not know, they could not explain what they themselves were good for.[26]

The rebelliousness of the novel, its nonconformism, is not present as a clearly expressed social criticism but is hidden in the very fact that the book deals sympathetically with the phenomenon of the stiliagi. However, it does contain numerous rather outspoken critical comments on, for example, the official propaganda:

> And there was nothing but shit on the radio today. As Viktor always said, the best thing about the radio was the switch that would turn it of. Seriously! For instance: here they will sentence some poor thief to 5 years. But why? It would be better to force him to listen every day to the songs which the radio committee offers its "dear listeners" every night. This would sharply reduce the number of criminals.[27]

The irony which is present in this excerpt and in the title is typical of Gladilin. As a matter of fact, the tone of the novel is based on the ironical attitude of its heroes, an attitude ~~which becomes most~~ clear ~~in~~ relation to the officialdom of parents, school, work and other social institutions.

Viktor does not have a father, but the generation conflict is clearly expressed in his relationship with his mother -- a poor canteen waitress who wants him to become an engineer:

> -...You weren't admitted at the institute. Everybody else is studying but not you! And all because you've let yourself go. You stuck your nose in the air as if to say: I know everything!
> ("Amazing how she reads my thoughts")
> - But what did you know? How to have a good time with the guys? How to shirk school and disobey teachers? You've grown up, indeed! I always knew no good would come of it!
> ("That's right, after all mother is a fortune teller who consults the cards every day...")
> - And you were such a good boy. A Komsomol organizer, an excellent student. You were praised at meetings ...
> And so the day began. How many days in a year? 365? Why so many? I wish the evening would come sooner.[28]

Viktor does not comply with the wishes of his mother, the school or work, although in the end he starts working. The "father - son" conflict is not solved - - Viktor is, in the end, still not sure of what to do.

In other works, such as The Brigantine Raises Sail (Brigantina podnimaet parusa,1959) Gladilin continued to elaborate on the 'father - son' theme, having the conflict solved by evasion in space, but in his best work of the early period, The First Day of the New Year (Pervyi den' novogo goda, 1963) the protagonist has grown older (his name is now Feliks Alekhin). He is married, has a three year old daughter, is now a "left-wing"[29] painter, and the 'father - son' conflict has crystallized. The novel is structured as an "inner dialogue" between father and son. "Inner" because they are actually not capable of communicating with each other: "we both think that we understand everything fully"[30] without words.

Again the plot is rather simple. Feliks is disillusioned with his life; his marriage has become routine and, as a non-figurativist and a nonconformist, his prospects as a painter are dim. His father becomes fatally ill; his wife and daughter have gone to visit her family for the summer. And, on top of all this, he falls seriously in love with a young woman. He is now faced with a critical turning point in his life: what to do with his career, his marriage, and the relationship with his father who represents true communist morality and values. Should he conform and start painting the way the Socialist Realist bureaucrats want, should he restore his marriage and break with the woman he loves? At first he avoids making any decision by going on a journey ("kommandirovka" -- businesstrip) paid for by the art bureaucracy in order to give him inspiration. While away his father dies. Tormented by bad conscience Feliks decides to break with his mistress. The last pages (New Years eve) describe his attempts to convince himself that he did the right thing, that he can and will start working and living a "normal" life:

> Life is no fairy tale, ~~Ladies and~~ Gentlemen!
> The first day of the new year.
> And now the accounting, the minuses and the plusses. A fine balance for the year!
> I get scared. Those two people who are closest to me can't help me now.
> But I can neither run away nor hide.
> Enough of acting the child. You're an adult now. Enough. Will I be able to? Can I endure it? Will I be worthy?[31]

The ending is ambiguous; his marriage is doomed, he is still in love with another woman; and he is not willing to conform as a painter. His own conviction that he has done the right thing is dubious; and his attempt to cheer himself up is rather sad and pathetic:

> Hurry! There are already many dead people walking your streets. But every time you walk the streets of your memory you see yourself and those people with whom you cannot ever -- you see, that is unthinkable -- with whom you cannot ever meet.[32]

His sense of time rushing by and, therefore, of urgency, evokes a pessimistic view of his own future. Not at all a happy Socialist Realist ending, and it is not strange that Gladilin got into trouble with the authorities after this novel. The First Day of the New Year is, as a matter of fact, an attempt to revolt against the secure middle class, bourgeois life that the "fathers" fought to create. The central theme of the book is the individualist's fight against materialistic uniformity and boredom:

> Enormous houses stand there radiating light, music, gaity. But if they were to shed the cover of the walls, one would see an unusual sight. In all the houses, on all the floors the rooms, the tables, the bathtubs and sinks are placed in the same way. Everywhere the sound of glasses, the meaningless conversations, the feverish consumption of snacks, old jokes, rumours, and the same old songs. People who are normally so different become identical at New Year. Almost simultaneously on all floors, tables are moved aside. dancing starts, then the quests leave, and the hosts (as if some devil is pulling the strings) simultaneously begin to yawn, turn off lights, undress (the whole house quickly throws its clothes onto chairs) and then, at last -- oh joy! (the little devil pulls again) --sleep![33]

And, as in The Chronicle, the tone is ironic, at times even very ironic:

> - Do you love your wife? -she asked.
> - I love my wife very much, my daughter, my mother, my room, my Moscow, our planet Earth, all ten planets of our solar system, our Milky Way, and even that neighboring galaxy[34].

And the irony is usually aimed at the system of mechanisms that control everything in the life of a Soviet citizen, as for instance, when Feliks' mistress asks him to tell about himself:

> I see. It's a questionnaire. Feoktist Filimonovich Fil'depersov. 1936. No. Married. Served in the White armies, belonged to the Kadet party. A member of the left and right opposition. Lived in occupied territory. At present spy for the Paraguayan intelligence. Cover name: Feliks. Will that do?[35]

At times he even feels that there is a police mechanism working inside his head (Gladilin might be alluding to the problem of self-censorship):

> The traffic officer who sits inside my head and analyzes my every movement telling me when to turn right or left or turning on a warning red light, was getting his signals mixed up.[36]

However, all of Feliks' convictions and opinions are most clearly expressed in opposition to his father, the old bolshevik. In one of his long inner monologues the father says:

> ... My school was the Civil War, theirs was 1956. A time of romance, and a time of analysis. ... A fascination with squeaky, psychopathic music, crazy painting, Western films, books, fashions has gripped some of our young people ... The most amazing is this departure from social existence into a narrow, personal world. But we suffered deprivations for your sake, we were building for you![20]

And Feliks answers in his imagined dialogue with the old man:

> So. The old story again: fathers and sons ... I'm talking about workers and artists, performers and engineers, truckers and doctors, who are interested not only in the famous Faustean question -- how to live, and why live? -- but who also want to answer that question by the way they act ... Under Stalin it was knocked into our heads: here everything is fine, everything is great.Our country is the richest.We have the wisest leader. He will protect us against all misery.And we believed all that ... But after the XX congress we learned about the tragedy of 37, about the tragic first days of the war, about the Leningrad affair. Can you imagine how that affected us all?[38]

He admits that his generation has matured, that they have grown up, have married and are raising children, but to him this does not mean that they have to live the way the society imposes on them: "We don't want to be a crowd -- each one like all the rest -- a voiceless figure on the chessboard of World politics."[39] And he does not want to follow the suggestions from the art bureaucracy.

One of his abstract-painter friends had painted a picture which the critics and the bureaucrats blamed for being too dark and therefore too critical. Under pressure he changed the painting, putting in some beautiful girls with flowers in their hands. The result was that nobody liked it and that the painter, like Faust, had sold his soul. This is exactly Feliks' alternative; in the end, he choses not to conform to any norms and rules in his art, because: "there are no ready made recipes."[40]

3.1.0.5. Aksyonov -- In 1962, a year after the publication of A Ticket To The Stars (Zvezdnyi bilet), Aksyonov told an interviewer from the journal Voprosy literatury (Literary problems), that: "I am still interested in the formation process of the character of the young Soviet person [...] The unconditional commitment to the truth of life guaranties the writer's real participation in the formation of the human being of the future."[41] In A Ticket he wanted to tell the "truth" about the new generation, and the novel turned out to be the most important example of Soviet Jeans Prose.

Aksyonov had less ambitious plans for this novel, than Kerouac had had with The Town & The City. He did not write a family saga but focused almost exclusively on the two 'sons' - Viktor (28 years old) and Dimka (17). Viktor is the ambitious young scientist who all his life has done exactly what his academic parents and society have expected of him. He has conformed all his life, whereas Dimka is the stiliaga who rebels against the 'fathers' by rejecting work and studies and by taking off on a journey (evasion in space) from Moscow to Tallin (Estonia) with three of his friends.

The novel is structured around Viktor and Dimka, and, in turn, we follow their maturation process with shifting narrative techniques, points of view (Viktor's first person narrative; a narrator; and Dimka's first person narrative). While Dimka and his rebellious stiliaga friends go on the road in order to escape the petty-bourgeois life of their parents, Viktor is turning rebellious in his own way. He is about to finish his dissertation but, while writing the official version, he is conducting some research which will change the officially accepted theory. His theory is that the stars and cosmos make an impact on the human psyche (which sounds like Dr. Chizhevskii's theories -- see the interview with Voznesensky). He finally decides to include the controversial anti-materialistic results of his research and successfully defends his thesis, but dies in a plane crash.

Dimka and his friends -- Iurka, Alik, and Galia -- on the other hand, seek adventure at the Baltic Beach. On the train to the coast they meet three ideal "positive" heroes of labour, who advise them to go to the new construction sites in Siberia and work for the good of society. But their answer is full of contempt: "Everybody is going to Siberia nowadays."[42] Our heroes reject not only the close, secure and dull world of their parents but also the solution recommended by party, state and official literature -- to go to the construction sites.

For some time they are having a lot of fun -- they enjoy the freedom of life at the beach, they dance, drink, listen to jazz, flirt, and dream. But society catches up with them when they run out of money. They try gambling but lose. Then they meet two black-marketeers, From and Matti, who deal in all kinds of black market items including dope and jeans. As Mikael Klefter has pointed out, here one subculture (the stiliagi) meets another one -- the criminal. And the confrontation is used by the author to demonstrate that there is a limit to the nonconformism of the former. Dimka & co. do not want to go so far as to get involved in criminal activity (although Dimka used to be with Matti in Moscow). Together the two groups earn some money by moving some furniture for a company, but when Matti and Fram start stealing from the company, Dimka, Iurka, and Alik not only back out but also beat them.[43]

After this episode things start to change. They get a job at a fishery kholkhoz, and this experience, which is in sharp contrast to their former lives, makes them start maturing. But, as in The First Day of the New Year, the ending is not at all clear cut. True, Iurka wants to start working at a factory, and Alik (the artist of the four) becomes less wild in his fantasies, but Dimka's fate is not at all clear. After some quarrels and partings he and Galia (who are in love with each other), reunite, but he has no definite plans for the future. After Viktor's death Dimka finds his (Viktor's) ticket to the stars (a view of the stars from Viktor's vindow resembling a train ticket). He knows that he wants to be himself, independent. He wants to decide his own fate, not to conform:

> I looked and looked up there and my heart began to spin and everything that had happened to me in my life and that is still going to happen started to spin too and I no longer knew whether it was me stretched out on my back with my head on the window sill or whether it was someone else. And the real, real stars, so full of great meaning, are turning above me.
> Whatever happens, this is now my ticket to the stars!
> Whether he knew it or not, Viktor has left this ticket to me. But where will the ticket take me?[44]

The novel It's Time, My Friend, It's Time (Pora, moi drug, pora; written in 1963) was Aksyonov's last attempt to deal with the youth theme as such. The young hero, Valentin Marvich (Valia), is not a teenager any more, but an experienced 25-year old man. It is, in many ways a logical continuation of A Ticket. One can easily imagine Dimka working as a truckdriver in Moscow, like Valia, and then drifting around the country. One can also imagine him and Tania (Galia), who is now a beautiful and famous actress, breaking up after a short but stormy marriage. His relationship with Tania is very complicated. They love each other very much, but still they are getting divorced because they keep tormenting each other. We never learn exactly why they left each other but it is clear that it has something to do with what they want to do with their lives and with the institution of marriage.

Dimka and Galia get acquainted with the Moscow Bohemia (artists, writers, filmmakers, and actors) in Tallin, where Galia is seduced by a much older actor. The same environment is the starting point of It's Time. Tania is making an "avant-garde" movie in Tallin, and is surrounded by admirers, famous actors and filmmakers. In the exotic surroundings of this ancient Gothic city they live a "real," carefree Bohemian life with love, sex and alcohol. Valia then turns up, and he and Tania have a short reunion. Valia who has just published his first three short stories makes a proposal to her:

> "Tanya", I said, "let's withdraw our divorce applications, what d'you think, Tanya?"
> "Oh yes?" she said. "And become a happy family?"
> "Well yes. They lived together for a hundred years and died on the same day. Wouldn't that be a good plan?"
> "No", she said sharply. "How silly! How can you be so old-fashioned? ... Family life would start tomorrow. I've suffered enough with you."[45]

He then leaves for Siberia with a friend.

In the meantime, a young man, nicknamed Kyanukuk by the Bohemians, is in love with Tania. Kyanukuk is an outsider (it is hinted at that he probably supresses a tendency toward homosexuality), a lonely sensitive dreamer who has become the clown of the Bohemian crowd because he keeps inventing some fantastic stories; they never have taken him seriously, and this hurts him. Valia, on the countrary, has taken a liking to him because of his goodness and loneliness and because "It's better to be inadequate than to be strong."[46] After rejecting Kyanukuk Tania has a short affair with one of the "strong" ones. And this, as a matter of fact, leads to the death of Kyanukuk. At a drunken party he wants to show that he too can be strong and vulgar. He takes a ride on a motorbike and dies in a crash. The death of Kyanukuk makes Tania realize the futility and emptiness of the life she has been living and the fact that she cannot live without Valia.

In Siberia Valia is working and writing, trying to find himself. He lives with two friends who are "real" workers, out of the people. Tania arrives and she and Valia are together again, but when he learns about the death of Kyanukuk he suddenly leaves for several days without any explanation. When he nevertheless returns to her she asks him: " - Will you go on disappearing like that sometimes, mysteriously melting into the thin air? - I expect so. - That's a nice outlook for me, she sighed. "[47]

It might seem a rather conventional ending to a conventional story. They do find each other. However, the novel goes much further than can be seen from a brief outline of the plot. It is not just a matter of a conflict between the artificial world of the Bohemians and a natural life of labour in Sibiria. The main conflict is between the individual and the demands of society, between "following your nature" and "doing what is expected of you." In a sense, Valia is a natural anarchist, a strong individualist who, like the heroes of Kerouac, refuses to do what is expected of him. He and Tania reject the conventional institution of marriage as a way of life imposed on them by society. Their marriage is indeed very unconventional; it is, in some ways, similar to the marriages of Dean Moriarty in On the Road, but less male chauvinist -- they are not even going to live together. It is a marriage on their own terms. Furthermore, Valia's anarchistic and free nature is hinted at throughout the novel. The phrases "Oh these men, wandering about, imagining things. . ." and "I was becoming one of the people who are described in the papers as always travelling about the world"[47] become leitmotifs, and he is characterized as a man who "always steered an independent course."[48]

What Valia is revolting against is the strict rules of a society which, to him, seems unnatural and artificial. Far out in Sibiria, however, he for a moment finds a world which:

> did not intrude; it was peaceful and compact, and, on the whole, well intentioned. It did not attempt to involve you in its life, or make you submit to its laws. It had enough to do without you. Here it was possible to stretch oneself out on a boulder, and look at the sky, calm one's nerves, or create fantasies and rise above oneself. It was possible to think what one liked; one could thus increase one's sense of significance. It was also possible to smoke, whistle, spit, read books, catch fish, beat one's head on a stone, or suffer in silence.[49]

Valia, like other of Aksyonov's protagonists of that period (Kirpichenko from "Half-way to the Moon; see 3.2.), is very much a James Dean-like character -- calm and tough on the outside, but extremely insecure, sensitive and romantic inside, like Dean Moriarty. Despite his anarchistic nature he has some basic values and goals which he wants to pursue:

> I want simple, natural, human feelings and clear intentions. I want to stand up for my friends and love my wife and my children, I want to pity people and to do something good for them, and I don't want to hurt anyone.[50]

He is not against society and its institutions, such as work and marriage in principle, but it has to be on his terms, not forced upon him. But he detests all kinds of vulgar, physical strength when it is not combined with compassion and feeling, which is why he hates the physical sciences which are involved in the production of arms.[51]

His revolt is directed at conformism, against norms and rules brutally imposed on people. This is also expressed in his writings. As a writer he is an "avantgardist,"[52] who is "stripping himself bare, being very revealing, the devil knows what, surely he must have been drunk. He's bound to become a writer."[53]

3.1.0.6. Style and Signs of Revolt -- In On the Road Kerouac found his own voice in what he called spontaneous prose. In the article called "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose"(1958) he described the language of spontaneous prose as being an "undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret idea-words, blowing (as per jazz musician) on subject of image."[54] The idea was to give the reader telepathic shocks and meaning excitement by following "free association of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought, swimming sea of English with no discipline other than rhythms of exhalation and expostulated statement."[55] In the improvisations of jazz and bebop Kerouac had found a way to spontanously express the most unconscious and deep layers of the mind which was exactly what he wanted to do in his writing.

Canadian scholar Warren Tallman finds that jazz is a dominant influence in Kerouac's fiction. And, indeed, the impact of jazz and bebop not only on Keoruac and the Beats but on a whole generation on both sides of the iron curtain has been enormous. Tallman maintains that the music and street language of the Negroes and the outcasts of the big cities was taken over by the Beats to express how the "Now" is the only promised land, because these people had already lost the battle to establish their psyches within the social continuum. Through the spontaneity, the improvisations and associations of jazz they were able to escape into the moment. According to Tallman, the Beats assumed the principle of spontaneous creative freedom from bop and jazz in order to describe the "increasing ambiguity of meanings and relations between people."[56]

Jazz in Kerouac makes itself felt in language and style, and often it becomes the subject matter as well, as in this sequence, in which the expression is underlined by play with sound and rhythms:

> The behatted tenorman was blowing at the peak of a wonderfully satisfactory free idea, a rising and falling riff that went from "EE-yah!" to a crazier "EE-de-lee-yah!" and blasted along the rolling crash of butt-scarred drums hammered by a big brutal Negro with a bullneck who didn't give a damn about anything but punishing his busted tubs, crash, rattle-ti-boom, crash.[57]

In this extract there is only one full stop, the narrative is lead foreward by the growing ecstasy of the music, a rising flow of the sound and the frequent use of short, often one-syllabled words: peak, riff, crash, butt-, drums, damn, tubs, crash, - like the rhythm of the drums. Furthermore, the expressiveness is emphasized by the play with words: 'EE-de-lee-yeah', 'crash, rattle-ti-boom, crash', and by alliteration 'free. . .falling riff'; 'big brutal. . .bullneck, but punishing. . .busted tubs', using both vowels and consonants.

As Tallman points out, Kerouac in On The Road breaks totally with the soft, nostalgic and lyrical violin sound of The Town & The City. In On The Road "the sounds become BIFF, BOFF, BLIP, BLEEP, BOP, BEEP, CLINK, ZOWIE! Sounds break up. And are replaced by other sounds. The journey is NOW. The narrative is a humpty-dumpty heap. Such is the condition of NOW."[58] The vocabulary of the novel is consistently made up of Negro-hipster-bohemian slang and jazz jargon, creating a gap between "them" and "us" (cf. Flaker's scheme), as for instance: 'horn', 'dig', 'blow', 'mad', 'crazy', 'fug', fuck', 'whoee', 'gurls', 'gals', 'ball', 'kick', 'cat', 'cool', etc. As a matter of fact, the novel can be read as jazz variations on a theme, and "the melody which unifies the whole and lifts the cockeyed star up into the jazz sky is the holiness of life because this for Kerouac is the meaning of words, the inside of his sound."[59]

Some of the most powerful pages of On The Road are the ones depicting jazz sessions attended by Sal and Dean, e.g. when the tenorman seems to be singing: "Hey now, what's this thing we're all doing in this sad brown world?", and the answer is: "here we are dealing with the pit and prunejuice of poor beat life itself in the god-awful streets of man."[60] This makes Dean ecstatic: "Dig this guy, man! dig the way he sits there and doesn't move a bone and just balls that jack and can talk all night while he is doing it, only thing he doesn't bother with talking, ah, man, the things I could - I wish - oh, yes. Let's go, let's not stop - go now! Yes!"[61] And when finally a black musician makes "the suprise of a new simple variation of a chorus [...] it was all great moments of laughter and understanding for him and everyone else who heard."[62]

The words of the music are not important it is the sounds that matter -- sounds which create "moments of laughter and understanding," and the greatest musician is the one who will just "blow and blow - the mere sound and serious exuberance of the music is all he cares about. He's an artist."[63]

This language, this music, this subculture of Kerouac and the Beats is opposed to the official language and culture. They oppose it to the world in which people have:

> worries, they're counting the miles, they're thinking about where to sleep tonight, how much money for gas, the weather, how they'll get there anyway, you see. But they need to worry and betray time with urgencies false and otherwise, purely anxious and whiny, their souls really won't be at peace unless they can latch on to established and proven worry and having once found it they

> assume facial expressions to fit and go with it, which is, you see, unhappiness, and all the time it all flies by them and they know it and that too worries them no end.[64]

John Clellon Holmes' The Horn (1958) is another example of jazz influence on the Beats. In it the author portrays the jazz millieu in New York in the forties. Centered around the dying king of the saxophone, Edgar Pool (based on Lester Young and Charlie Parker) it employs the hip language of the jazz men. It is more conventionally. written than On The Road and Go, but it contains brilliant passages of long improvisations as for instance in the "Chorus, Metro" section, where one rhythmic sentence goes on for two pages:

> ... men witness the materialization of the spirit or the exposure of flesh, right there, now, the horn was raised horizontal over them, huge, triumphant, indissuadable, a gleaming miracle in the shocked light, repeating (of itself, it seemed) "Zonky! Zonky! Zonky! Zonk!"[65]

It is interesting that jazz has been of equal importance to Aksyonov and Kerouac. In our interview Aksyonov speaks about his love of jazz and about its essence being a "carnivalistic revolt against caste society"(see interview). In his works jazz has made itself more and more felt, but even in early works, such as the two discussed above, it is very much present. What Dimka, Galia, Valia, Kyanukuk and Tania (and, for that matter, Gladilin's protagonists) are listening to is jazz; jazz plays a great role in the formation of their language, their consciousness and their way of living.

And jazz played an important role in the formation of the consciousness of the Beat Generation and the New Wave in general. As Tim Pogachar points out:

> In America, the jazz scene -- then emerging from the underground -- and the spiritual perception of contemporary society inspired the young Beats. In Russia, the post-Stalin 'thaw' and the concurrent turn to the West supplied the impetus for Aksyonov's generation of writers. Although they write much differently, points of similarity exist between the Americans and the Russians. For instance, the importance of personal expression for both is exemplified in the image of the jazz saxophonist -- Samsik Sabler in Aksyonov's Ozhog [The Burn, PD] and the saxophonist in "Jazz of the Beat Generation" ... The figure of the jazz musician is perhaps the most central Americanism in Ozhog.[66]

Jazz in Aksyonov, as in Kerouac, reflects a concept of art as self-revelation (see 3.3.). Aksyonov's style in comparison to Kerouac's is more compact and perfected, it is written-down music, but not without a similar touch or illusion of spontaneity. It is the result of a similar interest in jazz and it mirrors a similar carnivalistic jazz atmosphere. Aksyonov was well at home in the underground jazz world of Leningrad in the 50s, and Samsik Sabler, who appears in both The Burn and in Our Golden Hardware, and other works, is a professional saxophone player. In The Burn Samsik's debut in 1956 is described, as is the whole atmosphere of the time:

> In those days we hardly knew bebop, had only just heard of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, had barely begun to improvise, but we were really into swing....
> Suddenly my sax howled so bitterly, so despairingly that several people in the hall shivered with fright. It was the first instance of my sax moaning of its own accord. Kostya Rogov told me later that when he heard that sound, his guts collapsed, all his organs fell into a chasm -- all exept one, which filled with blood and began to stand -- and at that moment Kostya realized that a new jazz was born. Maybe it was not even jazz but the breath of some mighty spirit blowing across oceans into my horn.
>
> The Song of the Petrograd Sax, Fall Model 1956
>
> I am poor,
>   poor,
>   poor,
> Tell everybody I haven't a cent!
> I am poor,
>   poor,
>   poor,
> Tell everybody I haven't any rights!
> Tell everybody I was conceived on rags in a prison hospital
> By two enemies of the people, a Trotskyite man and a Bukharinite woman in a shameful act ... [67]

As in real life, these musicians were arrested and "beaten" by the militsiia, but nevertheless:

> we played. But was it only a question of jazz? We longed to be part of the life of the whole world, part of the same "freedom-loving mankind" in whose ranks our elder brothers had so recently been fighting. Everyone was sick to death of living in our stinking shack, alongside the rotting corpse of Big Daddy. Everyone - Party members, People's Artists, KGB men, record breaking coal miners - everyone, except the bats hanging upside down in dark corners. And so we played .[68]

It must be stressed that what is described, is seen in retrospective, the events take place in the late 50s - early 60s, but the novel was written in the late 60s - early 70s. The jazz influence on Aksyonov's writing has been expanded gradually. The influence, however, was mainly swing and bigband jazz, whereas the Beats were attrected to bop.

In Aksyonov jazz is a powerful metaphor for the spirit of freedom, and at the same time its freedom is expressed in the very style of his writing. Essentially he expresses the same thing as Kerouac through jazz. It is done in a different way because Aksyonov, so to speak, lets the style imitate; but the atmosphere is the same and jazz is in both cases used as a tool for the heroes and the authors to escape the cold reality of post-war America and Russia, to escape into the ecstatic IT[69] (see 3.2.).

Jazz was a clear influence on the style of writing of Kerouac and Aksyonov, but it also made its impact on the lifestyles of the Beat and New Wave writers and their protagonists (the hipsters, stiliagi, and Beatniks), just as rock'n'roll became a way of life in the 60s. Dick Hebdige has analyzed this phenomenon in Subculture: The Meaning of Style. His main point is the British punks, but he has made some useful observations about the American Beats too.

Basically, Hebdige studies subcultures as 'systems of signs':

> The objections are lodged, the contradictions displayed ... at the profoundly superficial level of appearances; that is, at the level of signs. For the sign community, the community of myth-consumers, is not a uniform body ... The struggle between different discourses, different definitions and meanings within ideology is therefore always, at the same time, a struggle within signification: a struggle for possession of the sign which extends to even the most mundane areas of everyday life.[70]

And he continues:

> Style in subcultures is, then, pregnant with significance. Its transformations go 'against nature', interrupting the process of normalization. As such, they are gestures, movements towards a speech which offends the 'silent majority', which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus.[71]

The task, then, is to discern the hidden meaning in the signs, to trace their code. The structure and meaning of original Black jazz had in the 20s and 30s become "desublimated" (cm. Marcuse), but: "These suppressed meanings were .... triumphantly reaffirmed in be-bop, and by the mid-50s a new, younger white audience began to see itself reflected in the dangerous uneven surfaces of contemporary *avant-garde*." The result of this "convergence of black and white which was centered on race, sex, rebellion," was an "outraged reaction with which conservative America greeted the beat and the hipster."[72]

Hebdige then describes the mythology of the Black Man and his culture, which was symbolized in jazz and recreated by the Beat, who "studiously ragged in jeans and sandals, expressed a magical relation to a poverty which constituted in his imagination a divine essence, a state of grace, a sanctuary." In Black music and culture were, according to Hebdige, embedded the oppositional values which in a "fresh context served to symbolise and symptomatise the contradictions and tensions played out in [white] youth subculture."[73]

We shall later return to the Beats' and especially Kerouac's extreme idealization of Negro culture. What interests us here is jazz (Negro culture) and other elements as ~~signs~~ signs of "freedom-in-bondage."[74] 'Jazz', 'torn jeans', 'T-shirts', 'dope', 'hipster jargon', 'heroes' (ranging from W.C. Fields, Groucho Marx, James Dean and Marlon Brando to Hart Crane, Baudelaire and Dostoevsky) were all 'Beat' signs -- signs of belonging to the Beats, signs by which you recognized each other, and, most importantly, signs of protest against THEM -- THEIR LANGUAGE -- THEIR CULTURE, as Flaker puts it. And this was reflected both in lifestyle and in literary style. Take the example of 'jazz'. Jazz is the sign that makes Sal imagine his friends:

> And as I sat there listening to that sound of the night which bop has come to represent for all of us, I thought of all my friends from one end of the country to the other and how they were really all in the same vast backyard doing something frantic and rushing about.[75]

And this is how "outsiders" react:

> as Dean, sandwich in hand, stood bowed and jumping before the big phonograph, listening to a wild bop record I had just bought called "The Hunt," with Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray blowing their tops before a screaming audience .... The Southern folk looked at one another and shook their heads in awe. "What kind of friends does Sal have, anyway?" they said to my brother. He was stumped for an answer. Southerners don't like madness the least bit, not Dean's kind."[76]

To Sal and Dean, "all mad jazz records" mean "don't worry 'bout nothing!"[77] So, when they, for instance, play basketball, they "were like hotrock blackbelly tenorman Mad of American back-alley go-music trying to play basketball against Stan Getz and

Cool Charlie. They thought we were crazy."[78] And they, especially Dean, certainly looked different: "He was wearing a T-shirt, torn pants hanging down his belly, tattered shoes; he had not shaved, his hair was wild and bushy, his eyes bloodshot .... and on his face was the goofiest grin I ever saw."[79]

Thus, the signs are not only meant to signify protest and revolt, they are also, evidently, used to recognize "one of ours", to differentiate between THEM and US. The address is well-defined. The same goes for the literary style. On the Road, for instance, is written by one of US, for US, and about US, and it was certainly perceived as such.

The same is definitely the case with Russian Jeans Prose, as Irina Belova rightly has noticed:

> In the "youth prose" we are dealing with signs for obvious reasons: the books address themselves to people of the same age, the same life experience, or rather lack of experience, the same historical conditions. Mutual understanding, recognition, then, in many ways depended on the possibility of being understood from the first word, without saying it all. The introduction of city youth jargon into literature -- an event that shook up readers and critics -- undoubtedly means more than the renewal of the language -- this was the sign by which "our people" recognized each other, by which the goats were separated from the sheep...[80]

When the contemporary young reader in A Ticket found such words as "o'kej" (okay), "slabak"(a weak one), "khlopnut' po stakanu"(to drink a glas), " aborigeny" (lit. aboriginals, meaning parents). "rubat'" (to eat), "labukh" (jazz musician), "khello" (hello), "fartsovye" (black- marketeer), "dzhinsy"(jeans), "kon'"(lit. horse, meaning parent), "shishi'"(money), etc., he would immediately realize, what and whom it was all about, and to whom it was addressed, that it was written in his language, by one of his, about himself. A grown-up would, on the countrary, react by rejection (see **2.4.**).

A similar sign of belonging to the group is the clothing. We have seen how Gladilin's protagonists display their attitudes and their belonging to the stiliaga subculture by wearing foreign clothes, jeans, T-shirts and coats looking like James Dean. The same significance and importance of clothes as signs is found in Aksyonov. Dimka, for instance, walks around in his "gaudy Czeck shirt with its design of little lightening flashes, his pants that he got I don't know where, his Austrian- made loafers and his Russian head topped with a French variety of crew cut."[81]

Such signs might seem insignificant but, as a matter of fact, the meaning attached to them in the 50s - 60s was serious enough, indeed. As Voznesensky says, "imagine when Coca Cola was a symbol of bliss, people were fighting to get that, the Coca Cola sign was considered dangerous, yes, it was political" (see interview, p. 18). And these signs were certainly perceived by the authorities as signs of rebellion and subversiveness. In The Burn Aksyonov describes how the police raided the jazz concert (Samsik's debut), dispersing the "wretched, universally despised stiliagi, with their narrow stovepipe pants, trying to look like the boys from Broadway," who " would clip the collars of their Lentorg Soviet shirts, glue pieces of rubber to the soles of track shoes, and cut each others' hair in a Canadian crew cut."[82] At the police headquarters the "labukh," Samsik Sabler is searched, and the following "subversive signs" are found: "a comb full of dandruff, a copy of the Polish magazine Po Prostu containing a short story by Marek Hlasko, two soggy meat dumplings wrapped in a handkerchief, a packet of condoms yellowed with age, a blood-donor's record card, and a letter from Marina Vlady written in Paris."[83] And the response is that "the virgilantes were slashing the stilyagi's pants, shaving their heads in convictlike strips and tonsures, and photographing all these 'antisocial elements'."[84]

As Vail' and Genis write, the stiliagi were the first natural nonconformists, and their emblems were such fashionable signs as "stovepipe pants and canary yellow socks," later developing into a "marked indifference towards clothes:"

> The stiliagi who saw an autonomous value in things adopted a more realistic approach. Consequently, the police would ask them: "What's the meaning of this? What do you want to say?" A thing with no meaning or purpose was perceived as a threatening absurdity. [85]

And this "more realistic approach" lies, according to Vail and Genis in a new attitude towards the material world", it lay in carnivalism.

3.1.1. Social Criticism in a "Romantic" Light.

Revolt itself is nothing new, as we have seen. Some scholars even suggest that the theme of revolt is the most fundamental theme in literature.[86] The Beats were not the only American rebels around -- Salinger was there and so were many others, for instance, LeRoi Jones, James Baldwin, Norman Mailer, Nelson Algren, Ralph Ellison, and George Mandel, just to mention a few, who, like Salinger, in many ways were close to the Beats, but their revolt was different.

They have all dealt with the theme of youthful revolt; their novels are all in one way or the other non-conformistic in the sense that they present a sharply critical view of modern society and convey an "ideological" (political, social or moral) message. They show more or less realistically the horrors of life in "mass society."

Similarly, in the Soviet Union works by such writers as Vladimir Maksimov, Georgii Vladimov, Fazil Iskander, Iurii Trifonov, and Vladimir Voinovich -- who were all more or less socially close to Aksyonov, Gladilin, and Bitov -- cannot be seen as part of the new Wave for several reasons. Although they all, in one way or another, deal with the theme of revolt, they do not share the close identification with the generation as such, which is clear from their themes and language; and, perhaps most important, they do not reflect the Western spirit, the occupation with Western music, fashion, and other cultural phenomena.

The Beat novels, as examplified by Kerouac, not only reject society and all its institutiuons (including all political ideologies), they also represent a new way of thinking -- an opening up of consciousness. They convey a message which is basically apolitical.

Originally, the Beats only rarely concerned themselves with direct social criticism; they did not belong to any political party or trend of criticism. In Kerouac one rarely finds any explicit and direct social criticism. His revolt was usually not directed against any specific social institution. It was as if he rejected society *per se* and did not find it worthy of any further discussion because to him the important things were to be found somewhere else, in another dimension.

To elaborate on this let us now consider the following qoutation from his Visions of Cody:

> America, the word, the sound is the sound of my unhappiness, the pronunciation of my beat and stupid grief -- my happiness has no such name as America, it has a more personal smaller more tittering secret name -- America is being wanted by the police, pursued across Kentucky and Ohio, sleeping with the stockyard rats and howling tin shingles of gloomy hideaway silos, is the picture of an axe in True Detective Magazine , is the impersonal nighttime at crossings and junctions where everybody looks both ways, four ways, nobody cares -- America is where you're not even allowed to cry for yourself -- It's where Greeks try hard to be accepted and sometimes they're Maltese or from Cyprus -- America is what laid on Cody Pomeray's soul the onus and the stigma -- that in the form of a big plainclothesman beat the shit out of him in a backroom till he talked about something which isn't even important any more .... -- It's where at night the staggering drunks began to appear like cockroaches when the bars close --'It's where people, people, people are weeping and chewing their lips in bars as well as lone beds and masturbating in a million ways in every hiding hole you can find in the dark -- It has evil roads behind gas

> tanks where murderous dogs snarl from behind wire fences and cruisers suddenly leap out like getaway cars but from a crime more secret, more baneful than words can tell -- It's where Cody Pomeray learned that people aren't good, they want to be bad -- where he learned they want to cringe and beat, and snarl is the name of their lovemaking -- America made bones of a young boy's face and took dark paints and made hollows around his eyes, and made his cheeks sink in pallid paste and grew furrows on a marble front and transformed the eager wishfulness into the thicklipped silent wisdom of saying nothing, not even to yourself in the middle of the goddamn night .... -- Ah and nobody cares but the heart in the middle of US that will reappear when the salesmen all die. America's a lonely crockashit.[87]

The revolt which is expressed in this passage at first sight seems to be directed against capitalist America which is being governed by the salesmen. As a matter of fact, it is a rare example in Kerouac's works of direct social criticism in which he depicts America as a racist police state full of misery, poverty and violence, which has made people into evil, materialistic and lonely egoists. But there is something more to it -- it is a poetic landscape full of sadness, pity, longing and hope; and it is designed, not to change the political and economical system, which others might blame for the faults of America, but to create the mythological background for the appearance of the saintly hero in the idealistic, romantic and, yes, sentimental image of Cody (in other novels it would have been Dean, Japhy, Pic etc., and, eventually, an image of Kerouac himself). This is the empty, endless cosmos in which the angel, Cody, will eventually appear.

It is typical of Kerouac that whenever he touches upon issues which are normally on the agenda of social criticism -- poverty, racism, the military, drugs, the condition of the working class, etc. -- he always shows it in a romantic light as part of his deeply personal, mythological American landscape (sometimes, however, he was more specific, when he directed his criticism at the boredom of life in an America ruled by materialism).[88] And this landscape, despite its horrors, conveys a message of hope, it seems to say that the "real" America, which has a "more personal more tittering name" is hidden in the heart in the middle of the US and can be found "when the salesmen all die". In Visions of Cody and On the Road Cody, or, as he is called in On the Road, Dean, becomes the personification of America, the lost America that Kerouac was looking for. As Carole Vopat writes: "Dean Moriarty is himself America, or rather the dream of America, once innocent, young, full of promise and holiness, bursting with potential and vitality, now driven mad, crippled, impotent [...] ragged, dirty, lost."[89]

A similar, almost religious belief in the true, real existence of his country beneath its official surface can be found in Aksyonov's The Burn (Ozhog). The protagonist (or the five Apollinarieviches) is constantly searching for salvation "deep in the heart of Russia, still untouched by corruption."[90] At one point, when he is still a teenager (Tolia) visiting his mother in her exile in the Siberian city of Magadan, he has a hallucinatory vision of his Motherland under the influence of a drug called "chefir:"

> As I looked around in anguish at my Motherland, I saw a sun-baked asphalt yard and a white wall, past which was walking a red-haired woman in a long, vividly colored Russian peasant's dress.... I had never been here before, but I knew this was my own tired, country. Everything around me was weary, and only this woman was fully alive and active as she walked briskly over the burning-hot asphalt, carelessly tossing her auburn hair as she went, kicking little stones out of her sandals, wrinkling her nose, and smiling boldly, challengingly, and aggressively at someone invisible; it might have been to me and she might have been Alisa...
>
> One day I will dream of her hip lying under my hand.
>
> ....
>
> The Motherland scraped its bare branches against the windows of the state orphanage for children of enemies of the people. Oh, how gray, how damp the sky of my native country!
>
> She conducts physicals in the medical room of the local military commandant's office. Stand up with your back to me! Bend down! Strain! My Motherland doesn't like it when a lump appears out of the back passageway. Like any whore, she prefers young soldiers without hemorrhoids.
>
> Sooner or later, on a mysterious night I shall lie down in bed with my Motherland and run my hand over the curve of her hip and put my hand on her breasts, and she will touch my stomach with hers, she will wisper that she loves me and ask me to love her in return.
>
> .... She will call me at night to her corrupt and beautiful nighttime cities, to the capital she herself has defiled; she will whistle in my ears tunes of nostalgia for other countries. A drunken cosmic sky, a history full of gallows and drumbeats, my Jewish Russia, my cardboard, my plywood and red calico socialism, so dear and so nauseating.
>
> ....The heirs of my country, runaways, deserters, free men, chefir drinkers, descendants of Pugachov, Russian cowboys, had hatched this audacious plot!
>
> My Motherland is not audacious. She may be cruel, but she is meek. She breathes through her mouth because she has adenoids and nostrils blocked by Stalinism, and her forehead, beautiful as the dome of the Monastry of the Trinity, is covered in pimples. My motherland is going to engage in a life-and-death struggle on the ship's deck. My Motherland wants to run away from herself to America.
>
> I don't want to run away! I toss from side to side, from the past into the future. Don't carry me away, don't carry me away to America![91]

Here the Motherland, like Kerouac's America, is in the hands of evil rulers (the Stalinist military commandants) who in the concentration camps and the orphanages try to correct, shape, and rectify boys and girls -- the outcasts and Russian cowboys -- just as Kerouac's America "made bones of a young boy's face and took dark paint and made hollows around his eyes."

It is ironic, almost prophetic that Aksyonov, who in 1980 was forced to leave the USSR and go to the U.S.A., ten years earlier exclaimed:"don't carry me away to America." In the quoted passage his "love-hate" relationship with Russia is clearly indicated. He loves what he perceives as the "real" Russia in the romantic image of a mythological woman (Alisa) "smiling boldly, challengingly, and aggressively". He hates everything that is connected with the Stalinist system -- the military, the camps, the corruption -- embodied in the cruel Captain Cheptsov.

Kerouac's mythological hero was Cody, whom he saw as both a creation of the salesmen's America and a negation of it. In a similar way Alisa, the romantic heroine of The Burn, is seen as a product of Stalinist Russia and a personification of the real Russia -- the protagonist's only hope of salvation. The tragedy of the novel is that although the qouted passage foresees a time when the Motherland will be begging for his love, it leaves him no hope of ever being reunited with Alisa because the pervading influence of the Stalinists has been too strong.

Early in the novel there is a scene which might be seen as a discussion between two Beatniks -- the American, Patrick Thunderjet, who often behaves like a stereotyped Beatnik, running around qouting "Howl", and the Russian Apollinarievich (the "I" of the novel). Thunderjet expresses his hate of the America "they call their motherland, that whore with sour milk in her tits. She has nothing in common with my childhood, with the thing I remember with nostalgia."[92]

When Apollinarievich insists that he, on the contrary, cannot help but still loving the true Russia, and that behind the dirt you will find human beings, individuals, each of them with an "intellect, a soul, a longing for God", Thunderjet replies that "the only person who can claim to have a personality is the guy who manages to escape. Once you merge with a political or an antipolitical system, you become a producer or a consumer, a guardian or a destroyer."[93]

The difference between the two viewpoints is, it turns out, that Thunderjet is an atheist, while the Russian is a Christian. In Book Three of the novel, when Apollinarievich commits suicide by throwing himself out of a window, he has a pre-mortal vision in which he and Thunderjet fly to the Moon. Here they find Captain Cheptsov, now as a "philosophical structure", looking after all kinds of religious symbols in a museum. When God's voice is finally heard it rejects these "symbols of your own unhappiness" and makes it clear that only the thought of God is important and brings hope.[94]

The Christian message of The Burn is powerful, and it is not the heavy, dogmatic Christianity of the Orthodox Church and Solzhenitsyn: it is a message about a joyful, forgiving Christ. This theme is important to the understanding of the novel and of the spiritual nature of both the Beat Generation and the New Wave.

It must be stressed that the image of Thunderjet is Aksyonov's perception of one American Beatnik who has become a disillusioned and somewhat cynical atheist. It is not how Kerouac or others of the Beats regarded themselves and their movement. Both Kerouac and Holmes insisted from the very beginning that "they were on a quest, and that the specific object of their quest was spiritual,"[95] that the Beat Generation was basically a religious generation.

Apollinarievich wonders why Thunderjet, having been brought up reading the Bible, is not capable of believing in Jesus, whereas Apollinarievich, having been brought up reading chapter 4 of Stalin's Short Course on Marxism and atheism, is a believer.[96] The answer lies, of course, in the fact that they are both revolting against the religions of their fathers -- Thunderjet against Christianity, Apollinarievich against Communism. The real Beats, however, did not become atheists like Thunderjet, but turned to other religions, in many cases Buddhism -- Kerouac in The Dharma Bums, which in turn was influenced by the Buddhist studies of Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg.

3.1.2. Carnivalistic Revolt.

Kerouac, in an article, informs us that the word 'beat was first introduced by Herbert Huncke, who had "brought it from some midwest carnival."[97] His choice of the word "carnival" is, of course, accidental, but the concept of carnival plays an all-important role in Kerouac's work and the Beat imagery and philosophy as a whole.

The general atmosphere of On the Road is carnivalistic. What Sal (the narrator) is looking for in Dean, whom he follows in the non-stop journeys across the continent, is, as a matter of fact, the carnival spirit which seems to surround this "shrouded traveler" all the time. They both want to turn reality into an eternal carnival. They actually go to a carnival in Denver where "we dug the carnival together. There were merry-go-rounds, Ferris wheels, popcorn, roulette wheels, sawdust, and hundreds of young Denver kids in jeans wandering around. Dust rose to the stars together with every sad music on earth;"[98] but only in Mexico do they find a "real" carnival:

> In downtown Mexico City thousands of hipsters in floppy straw hats and

> long-lapeled jackets over bare chests padded along the main drag, some of them selling crucifixes and weed in the alleys, some of them kneeling in beat chapels next to Mexican burlesque shows in sheds .... Mambo blared from everywhere. Hundreds of whores lined themselves along the dark and narrow streets and their sorrowful eyes gleamed at us in the night. We wandered in a frenzy and a dream. We ate beautiful steaks for forty-eight cents in a strange tiled Mexican cafeteria with generations of marimba musicians standing at one immense marimba -- also wandering singing guitarists, and old men on corners blowing trumpets. You went by the sour stink of pulque saloons; they gave you a water glass of cactus juice in there, two cents. Nothing stopped; the streets were alive all night.[99]

This is where they feel at home and alive. Here the subcultural combination of Bohemians, hipsters, and native Mexicans join in a prolonged carnival -- a burlesque outburst of human joy. The carnival ends and our heroes are forced to continue their search for new carnivals or "kicks," as they call it.

Before explaining the meaning of the carnival we shall have a look at how it is implemented in Aksyonov.

In A Ticket to the Stars the stiliagi heroes have two places in Moscow where for short periods, they can feel free, out of reach of the parents, the school, and other demanding institutions. One is the entertainment park:

> In the sixty-four cabins of that wheel, people are laughing and exclaiming, pretending to be terrified. From the bottom of the park comes the sound of jazz. The wheel goes round and round and so does the whole little ball of our earth, stuffed with mystery. The whole park is moving and so are all the people inside it. Over there we laugh, while here we are silent. What is the relation between all these movements -- just try and work it out. Jazz and symphony. Here is our sky, so suitable for fireworks and for the flight of large, deadly rockets.[100]

The distinction between "over there" and "here" is very clear -- "there" you perceive the world in its joyous aspect, you laugh, while "here" the world is grim, threatening and silent; over "there" life is full of mystery and joy and movement ("just try to work it out"), while "here" it is dull and one-dimensional ("here" we know what we've got: the deadly rockets).

Every night the stiliagi gather in the romantic courtyard of the housing complex called Barcelona, where they perform all kinds of 'illegal' acts -- they smoke, listen to jazz, tell anecdotes, kiss each other, and dance:

> suddenly they became aware of a certain inspiring beat and our dreary patch of

> lawn soared into the air, floated aboce the roofs and overhead, the stars started turning round and round...A girl and a boy dance and the whole world around them become disguised, like a carnival .... The teenagers are dancing and, for a moment, they need nothing else.[101]

In our interview Aksyonov explained how he and his friends lived like Beatniks in the mid fifties wearing "torn clothes", listening and dancing to jazz, drinking and writing poetry, and how the new generation of writers were Bohemians: "A new generation came into literature -- daring, a bit hooliganish and defiant. It was such a provocative generation -- there was a Renaissance-like, carnival spirit. And there were constant fiestas..."(see interview). The importance of this kind of celebration of joy to Aksyonov and the New Wave and to the Beats cannot be overestimated. As a matter of fact, the carnivalistic spirit as a means of retreating from and reacting against the serious, official society, runs through most of both Aksyonov and Kerouac's works. Aksyonov's stiliagi from A Ticket to the Stars turn into nonconformist writers and artists in later works, such as "It's a Pity You Weren't With Us," It's Time, My Friend, It's Time, and The Burn. In the Bohemian subculture they find the carnival spirit which makes it possible for them to express themselves. We shall later discuss the protagonists as such; here it is sufficient to state that they formed a Bohemian subculture which, in many ways, resembled the world of On the Road, Go, and The Subterraneans.

Patrick Thunderjet represents the Western, Beat side of our hero in The Burn, and usually it is Patrick we see laughing as a maniac. However, at one point Pantelei Apollinarievich (the writer -- one of the five aspects of the main character) wins an enormous amount of rubles, and he reacts this way:

> Everything sane, sportsmanlike, and amorous faded into the background .... I was roaring with laughter like a madman, stuffing Marcello's Japanese glasses down his throat; laughing like a maniac as I saw the figure of my winnings .... I laughed like a crazy fool, clasping my best friend and future co-author, Afanasy; laughed like a madman as I made an indecent proposition to Silly Zoika, his fiancee.[102]

This is the start of a new, drunken carnivalistic journey that ends in Yalta's medical detention. But first the heroes turn the world upside down: they both have sex with Silly Zoika, whose friend, Afanasy is a KGB employee; they drink and sing and dance in Yalta, where they also bring a military excercise to a sudden halt by offering drinks and flowers to the children-soldiers, whereafter they all -- soldiers, officers, and our Beatniks -- in a flower-power parade return to a the city, etc. -- all in a mocking carnivalistic tone.

Dean's mad laughter is a leitmotif of On the Road, as when Sal suddenly hears "his mad laugh all over the boat -- 'Hee-hee- hee-hee-hee'."[103]

What is the nature of this infectious laughter? John Tytell interprets it as a sign of Dean's freedom: "In the novel, laughter -- even in the presence of despair -- becomes a kind of life-force, a token of spirit; merely to laugh at the world, like the existentialist ability to say no, becomes a valuable source of inspiration for Kerouac."[104] Deans's laughter resembles a carnival laughter in the Bakhtinian sense:

> It is, first of all, a festive laughter. Therefore it is not an individual reaction to some isolated 'comic' event. Carnival laughter is the laughter of all people. Second, it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent; it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives.[105]

This kind of laughter was, according to Bakhtin, the basis of the carnival in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and of the literature that grew out of it. Bakhtin always stresses the ambivalent character of the carnival -- it was not bare negation but also affirmation; it created a momentary "utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance," in which people would perceive the world in its laughing aspect; and it offered: "a completely different, nonofficial, extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations; they build a second world and a second life outside officialdom."[106] Whereas the carnival and its laughter in the Romantic period had lost some of its natural, joyous, affirmative, and universal character, and had become formalized and more individual in a world ruled by the Id.

Dean and Sal, Dimka and Viktor, Patrick and Apollinarievich laugh at the world; and although one can hear some Faustean overtones in it, it is, nevertheless, basically a Gargantuan laughter, combining body and spirit, rejection and affirmation.

3.2. THE QUEST

3.2.1. On The Road -- Escape or Search?

"To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for traveling souls" ... wrote Whitman in "Song of the Open Road" -- a poem which undoubtedly has influenced Kerouac's fascination with the road, even more so than Huck Finn, Moby Dick, Jack London's The Road, Dos Passos' U.S.A. trilology, and Thomas Wolfe's Of Time and the River.[1]

Like the "I" of Whitman's poem, Kerouac's Sal and Dean set out on a journey of self-discovery, but their journey leads to "a universal extension of love. As an invitation away from selfishness, the road is its own reward, its own reason for being."[2] The road is the all-important motif in On the Road, the journey the all-important theme, and the urge to move the all-important drive behind Sal and Dean. They are always on the move from one place to another, from one side of the continent to the other, feverishly speeding in borrowed or stolen cars, hitch-hiking, or riding a bus.

Old Bull Lee (the fictionalized William Burroughs) asks them in the novel: ""I want you to sit quiet a minute and tell me what you're doing crossing the country like this." Dean could only blush and say, "Ah well, you know how it is"."[3] A very good question, indeed. What is it that makes them leave everything and rush off on the road back and forth?

Carole Gottlieb Vopat insists that it is an escape rather than a search: "Sal Paradise goes on the road to escape from life rather than to find it, ... he runs from the intimacy and responsibility of the more demanding human relationship."[4] Melwin W. Askew, seeing On The Road in the tradition of Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, and Salinger, writes that they are both escaping and searching:

> ...on the move, on the road for the promise of better things; on the move to escape entanglements with time and the heart; on the move and on the road for the promise of the father figure, the authority, the security somewhere.[5]

Ørm Øverland stresses that "Kerouac was filled with longing and admiration for a life outside the established society,"[6] from which he attempted to escape although he could never completely let go of the secure home represented by his mother, fictionalized as the aunt in On The Road: "The route for this escape lay to the West, and the West, too, stood for freedom in contrast with the established life patterns of the East."[7]

There is, indeed, a certain pattern in the journeys. The novel consists of five parts each depicting one major travel experience. **Part One**: New York - Denver - San Francisco (LA) - New York; **Part Two**: (South Virginia) New York - (New Orleans) San Francisco (Huston) - New York; **Part Three**: (New York, Denver, very briefly) - San Francisco - (Salt Lake City) Denver - (Chicago) New York; **Part Four**: New York - Denver - Mexico City - New York; **Part Five**: (Dean alone) San Francisco - New York - San Francisco. The pattern is from coast to coast at first starting in the East going West, with Denver as a sort of oasis in the middle. Only once do they cross the US border to Mexico - elsewhere there are no borders. But the pattern is partly broken in Part Three, when they go East together ; in Part Four the direction is out of the U.S.A. (South), and in Part Five, Dean alone makes a final desperate trip back and forth, across America, this time starting in San Francisco. The pattern of the travels is important because it corresponds with the development of the consciousness of the heroes.

Øverland very convincingly shows how Sal's initial dream of the West as the legendary Promised Land gradually turns into disillusionment. ~~In~~ the begining of the novel Sal had "often dreamed of going West to see the country, always vaguely planning and never taking off (OTR, 3). When he finally takes off it is because he feels that "everything was dead" in his life in the East, and under the influence of his new friend Dean Moriarty, the "western kinsman of the sun"(OTR, 10). In the beginning he is full of expectation and wonder with "my life on the road" (OTR,3), which he thinks will lead him through the Promised Land to an even "greater vision of San Francisco beyond, like jewels in the night" (OTR, 16). He has a feeling that his old life in the East has come to an end: "I was half-way across America, at the dividing line between the East of my youth and the West of my future" (OTR, 17). However, traveling across the continent, he slowly realizes that life in the West is no less futile than in the East. He exclaims that "LA is the loneliest and most brutal of American cities" (OTR, 85), and he gets the feeling that "everything was collapsing" and an urge to go back East "home, and work again" (OTR, 107).

As Øverland writes:

> West first represented a state of mind, a vision, associated not only with the wide open spaces but with cities that somehow held the promise of a new life. Gradually, however, West becomes merely a direction, and following this direction long enough Sal Paradise discovers that you merely come to the end of the continent: no more land.[8]

As we saw with the American landscape in Visions of Cody, Kerouac and his narrative voice, Sal, have a completely special, deeply personal understanding of what the West is. H. R. Huebel points out that the reality of the West that Sal encounters is "neither the nineteenth-century West, nor the movie, nor the tourist-trap version of it."[9] To Sal the West is embodied in Dean whose "reckless, manic, optimistic devil-may-care individualism makes him a catalogue of Western virtues."[10]

When Sal returns to New York after his first venture, he is completely disillusioned with both the West and the East, he has, at least temporarily, lost his vision, his belief in the American Dream -- only Dean is left:

> Suddenly I found myself on Times Square. I had traveled eight thousand miles around the American continent and I was back on Times Square; and right in the middle of a rush hour, too, seeing with my innocent road-eyes the absolute madness and fantastic hoorair of New York with its millions and millions hustling forever for a buck among themselves, the mad dream -- grabbing, taking, giving, sighing, dying, just so they could be buried in those awful cemetery cities beyond Long Island City. The high towers of the land -- the other end of the land, the place where Paper America is born (OTR, 106)

Sal is disillusioned with the American Dream, the Promised Land, and, eventually, with Dean. But his fascination with the road, his urge to move is still there. To him it represents not only freedom as such, not only escape from the secure boredom of his life. It is his extended self, his life: "Our battered suitcases were piled on the sidewalk again; we had longer ways to go. But no matter, the road is life" (OTR, 211).

George Dardess analyzes the complex structure of On the Road from the point of view that it is a love story (or a story of a dynamic friendship) rather than a travelogue. He sees a sign of the novel's complexity in the development of temporal and spatial relations. Comparing the beginning to the end of the novel he finds that the beginning is characterized by a clear distinction between the narrator's (Sal's) present, his Dean Moriarty past, and his pre-Dean Moriarty past, whereas the novel ends in a "complicated paragraph in which temporal and spatial boundaries are obliterated."[11] Similarily, the novel opens with a gleam of happiness but ends with a mixture of hope and discouragement, of expansiveness and resignation:

> The book begins with the narrator's construction of distinctions and boundaries; it ends with his discarding them -- a discarding which indicates his desire to suspend opposites in a perhaps continous state of flux. The book moves from hierachy to openness, from the limitation of possibilities to their expansion.[12]

Dardess then shows how Kerouac has managed to unify this open ending with a "time-honored novelistic and dramaturgic structure," divided into 5 chapters, the third of which describes the climax of Sal and Dean's friendship:

> Parts One and Two record Sal's gradual development of excited interest in Dean, while Part Four records Sal's development of an apocalyptic fear of him. Accompanying the growing complexity of Sal's relation to Dean is an outfanning geographical movement.[13]

In parts One and Two Sal develops a boyish romantic admiration for Dean but, beginning with Part Three, he begins to confront the negative aspects of Dean's conduct and the consequences of his "vulnerability to 'IT', to ecstasy, to the promise of being able to reduce time and space to smaller and smaller increments until they disappear altogether as measurements of activity."[14] Sal changes from being an admirer of Dean to becoming a father-figure to him. The 'dynamics' of the friendship and of the book is according to Dardess that Kerouac has depicted a character (Sal) who is able to see his friend both as God and as a "rat." The ending is open; it contains both contradictions.

The heroes of On The Road travel in space, time, and, on the metaphorical level, in their own inner world. The geographical (spatial) journey corresponds with a psychological journey. The problem of time and space is crucial to the understanding of the ideals expressed in this novel; a good tool for analyzing this problem is the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope.

3.2.1.1. The Chronotope of On The Road. - - 'Chronotope' is a concept used and defined by Bakhtin (although it is actually borrowed from Einstein) as:

> the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature .... it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space).
>
> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.[15]

In Bakhtin the chronotope is a fundamental principle of narration, functioning by materializing time in space:

> Time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible .... It is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showing-forth, the representability of events. And this is so thanks precisely to the special increase in density and concreteness of time markers -- the time of human life, the historical time -- that occurs within well-defined spatial areas[16].

Time is, Bakhtin stresses, the most important factor of the chronotope, and the concept can be explained as the text's inner time dimension -- the real experience of time which lies behind the course of time. The chronotope reflects the way this inner time dimension is implemented in the text (often the time dimension is expressed through spatial elements of the text: a merry go round may, fo instance indicate a cyclic concept of time). Among other chronotopes Bakhtin pays special attention to the chronotope of the road, in which the "unity of time and space markers is exhibited with exceptional precision and clarity,"[17] and which is closely associated with the chronotope of encounter. Random encounters with people of all social clases, religions, nationalities, ages etc. ,take place on the road and their various fates intersect at one spatial and temporal point:

> The chronotope of the road is both a point of new departures and a place for events to find their denouement. Time, as it were, fuses together with space and flows in it (forming the road); this is the source of the rich metaphorical expansion on the image of the road as a course: 'the course of life', 'to set out on a new course', ' the course of history' and so on; varied and multi-leveled are the ways in which road is turned into a metaphor, but its fundamental pivot is the flow of time.[18]

The chronotope of the road is, no doubt, one of the most important common features of the prose of the Beat Generation and the New Wave.

As George Dardess pointed out, On The Road moves from an opening past-tense narrative with clear temporal distinctions between various periods of Sal's life to a concluding present-tense narrative with the temporal elements in a state of flux. In between Sal and Dean have engaged in various activities which they see as part of their quest for IT, the most significant being the journey. Let us see how Sal and Dean try to explain their philosophy -- at one point Dean says:

> "You spend you whole life of non-interference with the wishes of others, including politicians and the rich, and nobody bothers you and you cut along and make it your own way". I agreed with him. He was reaching his Tao decision in the simplest direct way. "What's your road, man? -- holyboy road, madman road, rainbow road, any road. It's an anywhere road for anybody anyhow. Where body how? .... no matter where I live, my trunk's always

> sticking out from under the bed, I'm ready to leave or get thrown out. I've decided to leave everything out of my hands. You've seen me try and break my ass to make it and you know that it doesn't matter and we know time -- how to slow it up and walk and dig and just old-fashioned spade kicks, what other kicks are there? We know""(OTR, 251-52)

At another point he explains: "We know what IT is and we know TIME and we know that everything is really FINE" (OTR, 208). But what do they mean by IT and TIME? What is their secret?

It has something to do with longing for a moment outside time when they expect to encounter another, more authentic reality. The road to this reality is through the subconscious; and the means to get there are, above all, the journey, sex, drugs, and literary creativity. And this reality (IT) or state of mind is related to a specific perception of TIME and is clearly influenced by the Buddhist concept of an enlightened moment in which you are in touch with eternity. As for instance in this experience of Sal's:

> And for just a moment I had reached the point of ecstasy that I always wanted to reach, which was the complete step across chronological time into timeless shadows, and wonderment in the bleakness of the mortal realm, and the sensation of death kicking at my heels to move on, with a phantom dogging its own heels, and myself hurrying to a plank where all the angels dove off and flew into the holy void of uncreated emptiness, the potent and inconceivable radiances shining in bright Mind Essence .... I realized that I had died and been reborn numberless times but just didn't remember especially because the transistions from life to death and back to life are so ghostly easy (OTR, 173).

'Road' becomes a metaphor for 'life' ("...no matter, the road is life", -- OTR, 211), but it is a life in another dimension than the physical reality; it is the inner life, the inner reality. The physical journey leads through the geography of America, that is, it is known land to our heroes, but it soon becomes clear that it is parallelled by a spiritual journey into the unknown psyche of Sal and Dean. They want to be reborn into a permanent state of IT. The glimpses of IT provided by "kicks" only last for a few moments and they seem to force Dean and Sal to search for new "kicks," like an addiction. Sal and Dean believe to have found the permanent state of IT in people who are mad, in bop-musicians, in original non-white cultures which is why they express a romantic admiration of the poor, the Blacks, the Mexicans, etc.:

> wishing I were a Negro, feeling that the best the white world had offered was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night .... I wished I were a Denver Mexican, or even a poor overworked Jap, anything but what I was so drearily, a 'white man'

> dissillusioned .... I wished I were Joe. I was only myself, Sal Paradise, sad, strolling this violet dark, this unbearably sweet night, wishing I could exchange worlds with the happy, true-hearted, ecstatic Negroes of America (OTR, 180).

The chronotope of the road in On the Road is marked by an extreme orientation toward the present. Life (the road) is seen as a series of experiences (kicks) that happen along the road when the spatial line and the chronological time are halted in a moment of eternity as a still-life or, to use cinematographic terminology, as a frozen close-up.[19]

The disillusionment with the white world of America makes Sal and Dean leave the known land and cross the border into the unknown but exotic world of Mexico where they hope to find "the magic land at the end of the road." Here they feel as if they were "driving across the world" to Mexico City where they encounter the "traffic I've always dreamed of", and : "This was the great and final wild uninhibited Fellahin-childlike city that we knew we would find at the end of the road" (OTR, 302).

In the Mexico section the chronotope of the road is mixed with what Bakhtin calls the chronotope of the miraculous world, in which:

> time itself becomes to a certain extent miraculous. There appears a hyperbolization of time typical of the fairy tale: hours are dragged out, days are compressed into moments, it becomes possible to bewitch time itself. Time begins to be influenced by dreams; that is, we begin to see the peculiar distortions of temporal perspectives characteristic of dreams.[20]

This "subjective playing with time" is parallelled by a subjective playing with space. The result is an "emotional, subjective distortion of space, which is in part symbolic."[21]

The exotic surroundings and the carnivalistic tone combined with the two chronotopes provide the setting for Sal's "rebirth". His search for IT finally leads to his symbolic rebirth from the warm womb of the Mexican jungle. Lying on top of a car in the tropical night with blood all over him from thousands of mosquito bites he realizes that "the jungle takes you over and you become it" and the "atmosphere and I became the same". Just before dawn he has a vision of an approaching white horse , symbolizing the awakening consciousness. When he gets out of the warm and moist jungle he and Dean see a little Indian girl, and Dean says: "Think of it, being born and living on this ledge -- this ledge representing all you know of life." (OTR, 297) Now Sal, supposedly, has reached the same stage of IT as Dean. He should now have a deeper insight, being in a permanent state of ecstasy, that is, madness. When you have IT permanently, you no longer care about the horrors of reality but have entered an "new and unknown phase of things" with peace in the soul. Sal and Dean no longer belong to the group of disillusioned whites but "learn ourselves among the Fellahin Indians of the world, the essential strain of the basic primitive, wailing humanity." (OTR, 280)

Despite the fact that, soon after, Sal, sick, helpless and miserable, is deserted and left alone in Mexico by Dean, and later returns home to work and marriage in New York, we can nevertheless conclude that Sal and Dean's journey is basically a spiritual, even religious quest. In the quest they try to come to terms with reality, to find authenticity in their perception of reality -- and to them the only authentic reality is the inner one. Therefore the journey becomes a journey of self-discovery and of self-revelation. Let us again see how Dean tries to explain IT:

> "Here's a guy and everybody's there, right? Up to him to put down what's on everybody's mind. He starts the first chorus, then lines up his ideas, people, yeah, yeah, but get it, and then he rises to his fate and has to blow equal to it. All of a sudden somewhere in the middle of the chorus he gets it -- everybody looks up and knows; they listen; he picks it up and carries. Time stops. He's filling empty space with the substance of our lives, confessions of his bellybutton strain, remembrance of ideas, rehashes of old blowing. He has to blow across bridges and come back and do it with such infinite feeling soul-exploratory for the tune of the moment that everybody knows it's not the tune that counts but IT--" (OTR, 206).

The concept of IT is based on the Buddhist idea of enlightenment, that is, in the words of Erich Fromm: "the immediate, unreflected grasp of reality, without affective contamination and intellectualization, the realization of the relation of myself to the universe."[22] In general, this novel and, even more so, Kerouac's next published novel, The Dharma Bums, were deeply influenced by Zen. John Tytell has explained the importance of Zen to the Beats very clearly:

> The Beats responded to the Zen principle of final authority in the individual's spontaneous and intuitive insight and actions, as well as Zen's sanctification of every moment of existence. Wittgenstein taught: "Don't think -- look!" and in this fashion Zen transcends communication through words by dramatizing a potential awareness through an action, a gesture, a facial expression. Zen Buddhist "mindfulness" consists of bare attention to details -- seeing what is there without commentary, interpretation, judgement, or conclusion, and this appealed to the Beats, as they were intent on transgressing standard acceptable morality and convention.[23]

In On The Road, the journey is a symbol of the spiritual quest of IT. The chronotope of the road as seen in this novel reflects the Beat's difficulty in coming to terms with the unnoticed and uninterrupted flow of historical time while "everything is collapsing" (the refrain of On The Road). They turned inward in search of enlightenment, authenticity -- in other words, spiritual liberation, as Ginsberg calls it -- and a connection to eternity, and also in order to escape the harsh "reality" of the outer world. The outer world in On The Road is fragmented and unimportant, only to be used as fast as possible. The hectic use of cars, women, drugs, alcohol, the ecstatic "digging" of music and "mad" literature and people, all of this must be seen as elements of the search for IT. Kerouac's spontaneous prose too is a reflection of this search. By insisting on confessing his deepest feelings and reproducing the pure spontaneous thought process immediately, as it comes to the mind from the subconscious and without letting the intellect alter it, he believed to be able to reveal the true essence of IT.

In the process of searching for IT, the Beats necessarily engaged in an ongoing reevaluation of traditional values. They had a sense of the approaching apocalypse ("everything is falling apart", "everything is collapsing"), and this resulted in looking inwards rather than seeking a solution in any political ideology. Kerouac's attitudes towards social problems such as manual labour, poverty, race-discrimination, was, at best, naively romantic. By turning inward, they, in turn, created a mythic outlook on their own lives (see chapter 3.3.). Honest confession of the SELF became the one most important issue and gave the whole movement a narcissistic touch. They attempted to restore innocense by purging guilt, like Blake, and the revelation of the self was followed by a Whitmanesque expansive and cosmic sense of Self. As Tytell writes, self-revelation was the goal, nakedness the symbol.[24]

3.2.2. The Journey of the New Wave.

Aksyonov calls the motif of the journey "escapism; it's a metaphorical crossing over into another state, a widening of your horizons" (see interview, p. 32); Bitov admits that "I was a wanderer, I loved to travel -- that is still the core of our generation" (see p.50); and while ironizing over the editors who wanted to send writers "out to the people" on business trips (kommandirovki), Gladilin notes that the journey "is a motif of freedom .... in Stalin's time you needed a special passport in order to go and see your mother in the country, so the possibility of traveling all over the the country was something entirely new to us" (see interview, p. 80). And, indeed, all this was reflected in the prose of the New Wave. Rarely, if ever before, has mobility been such an important element of not only a literary movement but of a whole generation and its writers.

In 1961 Aksyonov declared that the main achievement and force of the New

Wave was to have depicted the speed of contemporary life; and he continued:

> Let's make a journey. Anatolii Kuznetsov provides the means of transportation -- a rickety bulldozer with just one headlight. It's a difficult road in the Spring. It's a road through doubts and loneliness leading to the sources of all human solidarity, to a feeling of the beat of life. We'll see the thoughtful Spring sunsets of Iurii Kazakov. They compel us to go further and further. And there are the rather rude guys of Anatolii Gladilin digging for gold. The gold deposits of the soul also need to be located and treated. We enter the student canteen with Evgenii Evtushenko .... and chat with the builders of the Bratsk Power Station like Andrei Voznesensky ....[25]

Gladilin's remark about the newly achieved right to travel all over the Soviet Union is very appropriate -- it became fashionable to send poets and writers out to the construction sites in the far East, or to fishing kolkhozes in the North, or to sovkhozes in the South or, in some cases, even to the cursed West. It was expected that they would send back reports glorifying the heroic deeds and achievements of the "real" Soviet people, or portraying the gloomy life of the proletariat in the West. However, in many cases, the editors were cheated and the travelogues turned into a distinct medium for the New Wave. This was especially the case, as we shall see, with Aksyonov and Bitov. In Bitov's hands the old travelogue form became a peculiar new genre, a new weapon which he exploited and developed to its full potentials. Vassily Aksyonov also made extensive use of the journey as a powerful new genre.

3.2.3. Aksyonov's Journeys.

In the case of Aksyonov, we find an intense urge to travel and to show his protagonists, alias his contemporaries, as wanderers, always on the road. His "travelogues" can be divided into what one could call semi-fictional (journalistic) travel memoirs ("Japanese Jottings" (1962), "Under the Skies of Sultry Argentina" (1963), and "'Round the Clock, Non-Stop" (1976)), and fictional works in which the development of the plot is connected with a journey.

Aksyonov himself has always felt an urge to travel. While being a successful writer in the Soviet Union he enjoyed the privilege of being allowed to go abroad several times. He went to Poland, Italy, Japan, and India (1962), Argentina (1963), Italy and Yugoslavia (1965), Japan, Austria, Swizerland, and Germany (1966), Bulgaria and England (1967), America (1975), France (1979). After his emigration in 1980 he settled down in the U.S. but continued to make visits to various places on both continents.

We shall in the following analyze selected examples of the second kind of "travelogue" in Aksyonov but first his semi-fictional journey to the West.

3.2.3.1. Digression: Aksyonov's journey to America -- 'Round the Clock, Non-Stop (Kruglye sutki, non-stop, 1976) consists of Aksyonov's impressions from his 1975 visit to the U.S. as a guest lecturer at the U.C.L.A. and it is a very significant work because it provides us with some essential clues to Aksyonov's writings and, especially, to his relationship with the Beats and American literature. It is a hybrid work combining, as D.B. Johnson states:

> the outer journey and the inner journey, reality and imagination .... The relationship between reality and imagination is a major theme of Aksënov's American travel memoir and is closely akin to a second theme -- the artists' creative process .... Both are essential ingredients of the master theme -- Aksënov's discovery of America.[26]

The work contains two lines of intermingled sections. One line consists of the author's reportage-like recollections, written in the 1'st person. The other line, called TAA (Typical American Adventure) is the seemingly fictional American adventure of the author's protagonist Moskvich and his (Moskvich's) imaginary creation, the anti-author Memozov (all written in the third person).

The TAA sections all depict various aspects of Aksyonov's mythic America (from the Mafia to jazz and the American dream) and:

> All these serial episodes are set in a silvery twilight zone and are drawn together by the hero's search for the maiden - in - distress .... The hero, the author Moskvich, surmounts the temptations and dangers of his quest, repeatedly confronting the villainous kidnapper Memozov, the anti-author, until the villain is vanquished and the Neznakomka [the unknown woman - PD], presumably the incarnation of the author's America, stands safe by his side.[27]

Inger Lauridsen sees the TAA as a "pure quest-tale" in which the goal of the search is the American essence personified by the Unknown Woman, the typical Californian beauty, the soul of jazz who:

> confirms his feeling that he knew her before he came to America and that he has been fighting for her. In this, I believe, there is a reference to the fight for renewal in Soviet arts during the years of thaw, a fight which was led by Aksënov and the young artists of the movement sometimes known as the New

Wave.[28]

One of the key ideas behind Aksyonov's writing is that "The artist's imagination is reality too. Maybe the imagination is no less real than the rustling of leaves;"[29] and this is the main subject discussed in the "Reality" sections. The whole work is an exploration of the area between reality and fantasy, between the surface of America and its myths, and the "imaginary figures flit at the fringes of reality and vice versa."[30]

The author touches upon a range of issues concerning the American "supercivilization", such as the wasteland created by industrialization, the power of the banks, advertising, in each case, without the typical Soviet doctrinary approach. But his main concern is the generation conflict, the role of the subculture (Beats, hippies, religious movements, grassroots and various liberation movements) and the liberal 'intelligentsia' as opposed to the establishment.

He is very sympathetic to the hippies and their predecessors, the Beats, but he tells an almost Marcusean story of the commercialization (desublimation) of the hippie movement. Comparing the hippies to the Beats he writes that they did not create any literature as the Beats had done, but they assimilated Kerouac, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti and Corso. He points out that even though the movement died out, it nevertheless became a certain lifestyle, music, rhythm, and movement: "the new youth got certain wealthy people to doubt the values of the dollar world .... and they brought a certain carnivalism into everyday life."[31]

In a highly interesting section Aksyonov traces the influence of American literature on his generation. He discusses Hemingway, Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Salinger, Steinbeck, Henry Miller, Orson Welles, and Vonnegut, but again it becomes clear that he feels the closest to the writers of his own generation -- the Beats. He was apparently deeply moved by his visit to the Six Gallery in San Francisco where Allen Ginsberg in 1956 had read his "Howl" for the first time:

> There were other of Allen's friends too, Ferlinghetti, Corso, Peter Orlovsky, but Jack was the craziest of them all .... Poor Kerouac, I feel sorry for Kerouac. I will never forget the "Jazz of the Beat Generation" .... Apparently there is something fatal in these outbursts, these flights over the heads of people in wild, spontaneus prose, that is impossible to stop. I used to know kids like Kerouac at home .... We felt strangely close to the American writers of our generation .... we seemed to stare into each others' eyes in a special way, as though we were searching for some unknown common childhood.[32]

'Round the Clock, Non-Stop is a journey not only of discovery of America but also of the author's self-discovery. It penetrates into the essence of Aksyonov's America which is, in the final analysis, closely related to his own country. It is clear where his sympathy lies. He feels one with the carnivalistic, burlesque side of America, its subculture, its non-conformist youth, its music, its literature.

3.2.3.2. Aksyonov's Journeys Continued.

V. Filipp interprets the extensive traveling in Aksyonov's works as a sign of "escape" (begstvo):

> The fortuitousness and fragmentariness of Aksyonov's prose is perfect for depicting the escape of his heroes from home, from their habitual daily life, from unhappy love. They need to "hurry on, on trains, hitch-hiking, walking, sailing, to swallow kilometers!"(A Ticket to the Stars) But the goal of the escape of these young people is uncertain.[33]

In my interpretation, however, this is only partly true. Aksyonov's heroes definitely "say no" to their surroundings and run off, but it is not out of pure nihilism -- they are also searching. In A Ticket to the Stars and It's Time, My Friend, It's Time the goal of the journey was rather diffuse and unclear, still very much connected to romantic ideas about exotic places and the freedom of the road.

In "Halfway to the Moon" (Na polputi k lune,1965) -- Aksyonov's most popular early short story -- the journey (or journeys) takes place on board a TU-114 airplane, back and forth between Khabarovsk and Moscow. The protagonist Kirpichenko is on his way from his workplace in far-away Siberia to a holiday in Moscow. He is a hard-working, heavy-drinking tough-guy who has not been able to establish close relationships with anyone. He has previously been in a prison camp on the Sakhalin island for a crime which he did not commit, but was later released and rehabilitated, and it is indicated that he, as a child, together with his family was forcibly moved from somewhere in Central Russia to Siberia.

In the airplane he is stunned by the kind smile and behaviour of the beautiful stewardess, Tanya:

> "May I take your coat?" asked the stewardess. It was the same one who rebuked Kirpichenko. He looked at her and melted. She was smiling. Her smiling face and hair bent over him. Her dark hair -- no, not black, but dark and undoubtedly

> soft hair -- was neatly done up and looked like fur, like fleece, like nylon like all the treasures in the world. Her fingers touched his sheepskin coat. You've never seen such fingers. No, all this happens in magazines, and of course not only there, but it never happens that you can find all of these things at once: such a smile, and the voice of the very first woman on earth; such things don't happen.[34]

This encounter with beauty on board a Soviet liner TU-114 "en route from Khabarovsk to Moscow .... at an altitude of 9.000 meters and at a speed of 700 kilometers per hour" becomes a turning point in Kirpichenko's life; he starts thinking, dreaming, and feeling:

> Down below, very far away, floated a jagged, rocky, lifeless expanse, which concealed death in every fold. Kirpichenko actually shuddered when he imagined that in this icy expanse over a harsh and desolate earth floated a metal cigar, filled with human warmth, courtesy, cigarette smoke, muffled talk and laughter .... And here he is, sitting and smoking, and somewhere in the tail section, or perhaps even in the midsection, a woman is promenading about, the likes of which don't really exist, and who are as far from you as the moon.[35]

He falls in love with this unattaianable woman and spends the rest of his vacation (and money) travelling back and forth (7 times) on the same route hoping to meet her again.

The journey becomes a symbol of the spiritual search of this devil-may-care character, his search for beauty and goodness within himself embodied in the image of the stewardess. He finally sees her at the airport but does not approach her because that would take away his newly achieved sense of contact with a spiritual world. Instead he thinks that the 300000 km to the moon is nothing: ""That's not far," thought Kirpichenko. "No sweat." He Looked at Tanya and imagined how he would remember her as he headed for the mountain crossing...."[36]

Many other short stories by Aksyonov, like "Victory," "Lunches of 1943," "It's A Pity You Weren't With Us," "Super Deluxe," "The Impudent Guest," and "The Right to an Island" all take place on the road in one way or the other; however, here I shall concentrate on a few major works which, taken together, sum up the meaning of the journey in Aksyonov.

Surplussed Barrelware (Zatovarennaia bochkotara,1968) is a highly allegorical short novel (povest') full of narrative and stylistic experimentation.[37] A group of people gather to drive on an open van loaded with empty barrels, driven by Volodia Teleskopov

(a Kirpichenko-like character), from a collective farm to the nearest large town called Myshkin. The incidents along the way, which constitute the narrative, shift from the realistic to the fantastic.

As soon as they set out curious things start to occur, and they enter a "miraculous world" which very much resembles that of fairy tales. It is characteristic of these people that their existence lacks meaning, especially their professional existence: Volodia has no definite profession, Vadim is an expert on a country he has never seen, Mochenkin is an expert on a beetle he has never seen, Irina, the teacher, asks her pupils meaningless questions. But they are all seekers, which becomes clear in their dreams. In all their dreams we find the "good man" waiting at the end. On the van each sits isolated in his own barrel, but gradually they become united in love and solicitude for the barrels. And gradually their dreams start resembling each other under the influence of their common love for the barrels; when all the passengers have to take leave of the barrels, each of them separately "trembles for his love." But it turns out that the barrels are not wanted in Myshkin. When the train, which was supposed to have taken the barrels further on, moves off, they say goodbye to their individual dreams, and in the last 'common dream' the barrels float away and the good man is still waiting.

The motif of the road becomes an image of man's journey through life always in search of an utopian ideal: the good man. Here the chronotope of the road is connected with the progression of time. The narrative proceeds chronologically, but at times, there are signs of time being suspended or prolonged: a trip reckoned to last two hours takes fifteen days and a ride on a merry-go-round takes many hours.

The barrel metaphor has several levels: the empty barrels, which have to be delivered at the train station; the individual barrels which the characters sit in, isolated from each other -- a symbol of the isolation of the individual; and the surplussed barrels considered as a whole (it actually comes alive), as a symbol of mankind. Together the metaphors of the road become a symbol of mankind, consisting of individuals who set out on the road through life, seeking an ideal, an aim in life. They unite in their love for the barrels, but that is an empty, hollow basis for a community and it does not enable them to break down the walls of their isolation, to rise above the banalities of everyday life.

In The Burn the time of writing no longer coincides with the time of the narrated story. It is past tense, a novel about time gone, about the youth of Aksyonov and his generation in the 50's and the 60's. It deals with the New Wave from a retrospective, intellectual point of view -- from its beginning to its end. In Search of A Genre, The

Heron, and Say Cheese tell the story of what happened later to the protagonists of the wave, having lost the battle with the reality of the Soviet Union. They tell the story of the disillusionment and loneliness of the 70's mixed with nostalgic memories, but they also show their continued 'search'.

It is interesting to our study that this turning point in Aksyonov's oeuvre also marks a renewed tendency towards a Beat way of writing. The Burn is surely the most Beat of Aksyonov's, works as some critics have pointed out (see 2.4.). Aksyonov never expected the novel to get published in the Soviet Union and thus no longer wrote under the restrictions of "self-censorship". Now he could let go -- and he did. The novel is full of Beat elements: Russian Beat characters, fictional American Beatniks (Patrick Thunderjet), and allusions to real Beats (Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti); it is full of jazz-themes, characters and motifs; and alcohol, drugs and sex are common features among its characters; the poems in the novel are written in the Beat style (clearly influenced by "Howl"), and the dreams and hallucinations read very much like Kerouac's Book of Dreams (see 3.3.); the surrealistic parts resemble Ferlinghetti's Her, etc. And, of course, the motif of the journey is used in a way which is similar to On the Road.

Book One ends with a fantastic journey from Moscow to the Crimea in which the American Beatnik Patrick Thunderjet joins his Russian counterparts -- Apollinarievich and Alik Neiarkii. Barefoot and drunk they enter an airplane in Moscow to wake up on the beach in Yalta as if to make real Patrick's theory of complete retreat from society. The three friends turn Yalta into a carnivalistic happening -- a "kapustnik" (satirical play) mocking Soviet society in many of its aspects: the bureaucracy, KGB, neo-Stalinism, and, especially, the military. A military exercise turns into a flower-power parade with singing children and a drunken general. However, the journey ends when they get arrested and sentenced to forced labour. They escape, but not for long, because they end up in the local medical detention center with delirium tremens.

On the metaphorical level this journey symbolizes the history of the New Wave -- from its optimistic devil-may-care idealism in the beginning to its fate in the late 60's (forced labour, delirium tremens). Like Sal and Dean's trip to Mexico it marks the beginning of the end of their youth and of that sense of comradeship and friendship that characterized it. Hereafter -- both in this novel and in the works that followed -- the hero is alone and isolated. Like the Mexico trip in On the Road it is a journey into the exotic, to a world in which the chronotope of the road merges with the chronotope of the miraculous world. Time stops and becomes an extended moment, full of joy and happiness. In both cases, however, it ends in fiasco and disillusionment.

In Book Three, when the hero (now called The Victim) has realized that everything is over, neo-Stalinism is growing, his friends have disappeared (bought by the state or emigrated),[38] the journey takes on the character of escape and, at the same time, it is a last desperate attempt to find something to believe in, to find salvation. It is a surreal journey which brings The Victim around Europe and, eventually, to the Russian countryside where he seeks salvation in Russia's 'unspoiled heart'. Wherever The Victim appears in his search/flight, he sees the reanimated former campguard Cheptsov, and in the end he commits suicide. In his premortal hallucination he and Patrick go to the moon together only to find Cheptsov there as a "philosophical structure. The last lines of the novel are a description of The Victim's final journey through Moscow. Everything comes to a halt " in a deadly-keen foreboding, in a deadly-joyful hope, in expectation of something mortally imminent". The waiting assumes religious significance and The Victim's death is a symbolic Christ's death -- the sufferer taking on the guilt of others and giving hope and faith.

Pavel Durov, the protagonist of In Search of a Genre (Poiski zhanra; published 1978) is constantly moving along in his Lada. He has no defined goal, but just "rolls along behind the wheel of his car from north to south, from west to east, as though fleeing from his doubts."[39] The only "single goal" mentioned is "to move about in new spaces."[40] However, it is clear that the title relates to him, he is searching for the meaning of his genre.

Durov is an artist in a "original dying genre" (artist / conjurer /charlatan). Travelling around he encounters a number of incidents and various people (the chronotope of the road and of meeting). As regards the ostensible plot the seven sections of the work have nothing in common other than Durov's search. There is no plot development during the course of the sections, the plot develops rather within each separate section, whereupon the next section relates Durov's experiences in a new place, without any motivating link to the previous section.

Durov is rootless, doubts himself and his genre (genre being a metaphor of both profession and identity). He too, like Kirpichenko, finds it difficult to make contact with the various hitch-hikers he picks up, instead he experiences and himself performs fantastic but meaningless miracles. Time and again he asks himself the question: what is a car? Among other things he concludes that it is an armchair that moves forward in space at great speed, a "little house on wheels, part of your own personal protective sphere."[41] The car, like the barrels, is a symbol of man's isolation, and the road is a symbol of life as an eternal search.

One very important element of the work's chronotope is the concept of the moment. At one point Durov falls asleep and dreams of a happy time when he has an aim in his life (genre):

> At last this was the unceasing moment in firm space, part of which I had become. All three sorrows of ours, past, present and future, came together in this wonderful time of life.[42]

This very moment (mgnoveniie/mig) is hinted at throughout the work: "Everything moved or held on in space," "Some of the surrounding objects settled," "Something moved for a moment," "Time flowed away in what it usually flows away in -- space" (this merging process is emphasized by the speeches also flowing into one another). In section 2, it is only three minutes that saves Durov from arrest. In section 5 he avoids a catastrophe only by the skin of his teeth after a dangerous drive: "How expressive are the words 'the last moment', how long lasting. As long lasting as they are momentary!"[43]

When the avalanche engulfs the valley (section 7) ,where Durov and the remaining 14 artists of the same genre have gathered to produce a real wonder, Durov sees the mishaps in flashes and in words. "The last moment" is repeated six times, but when they enter the miraculous real valley, these events are erased from his memory.

After all his experiences on the road Durov begins to change -- he realizes that the real miracle is not the one that he can perform with tinsel and a thunderclap (which he uses to turn a roast turkey into a flowerbed), but is nature and man as part of nature. He arrives at this final realization not by searching with the others in the valley, but by exploring himself. The concept of 'genre' is not simply refering to a genre of art, it is also an image of man's (of Aksyonov's generation in particular) identity.

The work goes far beyond a simple treatment of the artist's situation, it deals with the universal, the situation of man in modern industrialized society. The "scenes" in the work can be understood as the author's comments on the various episodes in the sections, his experiments within his own genre, i.e. prose, and the imaginary critic's comments on it. According to this imaginary critic, he fails, except in section 7, where art and reality become one. The key to Durov's understanding of the relationship between his genre (art) and reality is to be found in the arch-human being, the hippie Arkadius (chuvak - chelovek - men = a human being).[44] Arkadius' poem "A little theatre without footlights or set/ a theatre without walls or roof" makes Durov realize that art has to be free and without a framework, for reality has no boundaries. Only by viewing reality with MAN at its centre can this be understood.

The driving force behind the narrative is the characters' search. The characters are all traveling, the 14 others in Durov's genre come from all over the world, and those whom Durov meets on the road are all seekers: Alla sells beer, has had a husband, Slavik, who was a sailor, but she gives herself to Konstantin, who is a constant drifter and drunkard looking for his roots in Old Russia; likewise, Mamania and Zinaida are seekers, but it is most marked in Durov. Very early on he gets interested in phenomena which lie outside external reality: "It was not the damaged car that worried him but a certain holeyness in the expanse;"[45] and, his soul, "the poor thing certainly deserved a short holiday and a flight to other, cooler spheres."[46] In these "spheres," Durov asks: "Maybe life is death, and death is life?"

The answer is supplied throughout the work -- there is more between heaven and earth, there are more spheres in man, than the governing rationalistic materialism will admit, and one must discover them within oneself before one can find one's own identity and become a happy part of the world. At the outset, Durov does not have this awereness, but he dreams of it: "I dream about a wonderful time of life .... I was a full and equal part of this time, perhaps even its centre."[47] He discovers that beneath the surface of man there are irrational forces which determine his actions, forces such as love, fear of death, compassion, hatred or lust for power. These forces are capable of making man commit crimes (the driver, the forger, murderer etc.) but they can also perform miracles. When Durov realizes this, "the wonder of mass confidence .... came to me as if from the side .... had I really captured the genre that had disappeared?"[48].

Boris Briker is right in his conclusion about the goals of Durov and the explanation of the concept of genre:

> The true goal of Durov's peregrinations lies beyond the map of his various routes, but he nevertheless finds it, albeit by driving along the same roads and even entering it in his car: this goal is represented by the valley, the spatial incarnation of the genre, the place of miracles. .... Yet the valley is not the final goal of the genre, but rather, since it figures in the novel in a real dimension, it is still one more point on the road to the genre, because the fantastic valley appears later .... The contrast between the two valleys, one of them marked on the map, the other one the 'true' valley from

> another dimension, is in effect the contrast between search and genre ... The first valley represents the culmination of all searchings in the sphere of reality, while the true valley, which appears after the thundering of 'avalanches' and the 'death' of the fifteen genre performers, is the work's goal *qua* Utopian reality.[49]

And Briker furthermore rightly finds that the image of the road has a similar function in "Halfway to the Moon: " "The difference in the treatment of the wanderings is primarily that in In Search of a Genre an abstract goal is transformed into reality, while Kirpichenko remains, at story's end, only halfway to his goal."[50]

In all the works by Aksyonov discussed so far the goal of the search has been only vaguely defined.However, it is clear that Aksyonov's seekers are on a spiritual quest, which in many ways is similar to the quest of Kerouac's heroes. The moment in which time and space merge reflects Kerouac's idea of IT. It is undefinable, a moment of enlightenment in which you see the world clearly in a new light , when you get a sense of oneness with the universe, history, and with God. In other works by Aksyonov, the same phenomenon appears as a "metaphysical substance," such as "Dabl'-f'iu" in Our Golden Hardware and "Limfa-D," in The Burn.

In The Burn the quest is a more concrete religious quest, and the short story "The Village of Sviiazhsk" (Sviiazhsk,1981) elaborates more on how Aksyonov became religious and what religion means to him. The story is autobiographical to a high degree, although the hero is not Aksyonov, the former leader of the New Wave, but Shatkovskii, a former successful basketball couch, who has now lost his inspiration and power to induce the winning spirit into his team. He explains the loss of power by the disappearance of a spiritual dimension in his life. The lack of inspiration becomes especially clear to him when he finds himself incapable of praying at the death-bed of his best player. He starts digging into memories of moments of religious feelings that he experienced as a child at a monastery called Sviiazhsk. At the same time he is told the secret that as a child he was christened, when his nanny took him to a priest, despite the danger of persecution at the height of Stalin's terror. This is combined with an interest he develops in Eastern religions. He starts reading copies of Indian religious treaties circulating in Moscow (see the interview with Voznesensky about this phenomenon):

> In this manuscript there is a quotation from the Indian Yogi, Svami Krisnadvenanda, saying that everyone shall feel the eternal presence of the

> Almighty one with whom he is united by his immortal soul; the physical body is God's abode while the astral body is the human essence, a small bay in the endless ocean of cosmic energy pulsating along with him.[51]

In another manuscript he reads: "all humans are interrelated; there are no people who are not connected by a thin thread leading through our cosmic body to Logos."[52] This becomes the leading thread in his search back to the enlightened moments of his childhood. Thus, when he learns that his christening took place in the place of his mythological childhood monastery Sviiazhsk, he realizes that:

> Unexpectedly everything became united and full of the living spirit. Thus, this connection had always existed, unknown to me. Thus, my childish excitement amongst the tangle of Sviiazhsk had not come flying from out of nowhere, but through revolutions and wars from my godfather, the boy Vitia; what I had felt then was, therefore, the life of his spirit, of his pure childhood in that pure and prosperous, content and quiet, God-fearing Sviiazhsk.[53]

Suddenly something "extraordinary" starts happening to him, and he asks his friend Valevich a question, which is, in fact, the same question we have asked ourselves about Aksyonov's goals and ideals in this chapter:

> - Where does this moment exist if, from time to time, it is capable of emerging from non-existence with such clarity and so many details? - In the memory, - Valevich explains proudly. - In the cells of our brain - Valevich, do you know what a brain is, what the cells of the brain are, what a moment is? - The research is proceeding, - says he. - But seriously, do you remember Sviiazhsk? - The church? - Valevich asks quietly. - Of course, I do.[54]

The extraordinary thing is that he has regained his "prana", his religiosity, his power, and before the next basketball game he makes the sign of the cross over his players and they too make the sign. They win the game and, although Shatkovskii is immediately fired as a coach, he has regained his faith in God and in himself. Aksyonov's concrete journey is always, as he says, a journey into "other spheres", it always reflects some kind of spiritual quest or search for the ideal. A similar relationship between the concrete and the abstract exists in the other means of searching in Aksyonov too, as for instance the relationship with women. In the words of Boris Briker:

> The ideal (e.g., the heron, Alisa), which Aksyonov's protagonists in The Burn and other works seek by meeting and entering into relationships with an endless series of women, is very often not even the woman of their dreams, but instead a number of abstract categories such as a dream itself, freedom, Europe (in this

> instance as an abstract concept). In every case it is a matter of physical love with the 'ideal', ..., But each time the relationships of the protagonists to women, which Aksyonov depicts in very earthy terms, acquire meaning as paths to the abstract ideal.[55]

Thus, the ideal is always perceived as both concrete and abstract, it contains both a physical and a metaphysical dimension, and the ideal is always, in some way or the other related to art, as we shall see in the next chapter.

3.2.4. **Bitov's Journey**.

According to Andrei Bitov, "reality had declared itself unreal, and so somewhere the real life had to be going on" (see interview). What the Soviet critics saw as an unhealthy tendency to turn away from reality they (the New Wave) understood as looking for reality. This is, perhaps, Bitov's most important creed, and this he shares with Kerouac, Aksyonov and the others of the Beat Generation and the New Wave.

However, at first glance, it is difficult to see what else Bitov has in common with the Beats and Aksyonov, because he has developed his own unique style. His prose could be labeled philosophical and psychological, his style often seems rather dry and very exact. Many parts of his works read like treaties but then, in between, the style becomes extremely lively, poetic and metaphorical. This is especially true when he wants to reproduce a spontaneous thought process, as in One Country.

Bitov gave the New Wave a needed intellectual boost. In this regard, his role can be compared to that of Gary Snyder in the Beat Generation. Without doubt Bitov, together with Aksyonov, is one of the few prose writers of the New Wave whose contributions to Russian literature will prove to be of lasting importance. His most important novel Pushkinskii Dom (The Pushkin House) -- written in the late 60s (thus after he, in his own words, had left the wave) -- was never published in full in the Soviet Union, but appeared in the United States in 1978. It is a very complex novel tracing the intellectual and spiritual roots of the contemporary Soviet *intelligentsia* back to the classical Russian culture of the nobility. Bitov is also the author of many collections of short stories, most of which deal with certain psychological mechanisms preventing the protagonist from comming to terms with life, and another novel called Roman - punktir (A Dotted Love-Story) in which the author depicts the relationship between man and woman in three generations (or rather, their incapability of genuine love).

Here we are going to deal with another major part of Bitov's production -- his Seven

Journeys. The seven journeys were published together in one volume in 1976 but they had all previously appeared separately in the 60s. In our interview, Bitov states that only the first journey (Such a Long Childhood) belongs directly to the New Wave, whereas the second (One Country) and the third (Journey to a Childhood Friend) are about the wave; they treat the wave from a certain intellectual perspective. The first is almost entirely and openly fictional, whereas One Country and Journey to a Childhood Friend could be called semi-fictional, that is, as Bitov puts it, "under cover of documentalism, this genre is a very fruitful genre" (see interview).

In all these works (except the first), the journey is used as an excuse to dwell on various essential and less essential philosophical and psychological problems. The "real" physical journey is described as if from the point of view of a travelling journalist or writer, but soon a figurative meaning is added when the author - narrator starts reflecting on the nature of things. As Mikael Klefter points out:

> Bitov's inclination to ponder on the secrets of life has enriched his works with a multitude of thoughts and reflections, in which the wish to find "the universal core in each tiny fact" and not to pass over anything important becomes a leitmotif.[56]

Wherever the protagonist (and narrator) goes he is followed by the author's reflections on the secrets of life, nature, culture, ecology etc. -- all leading to the same thing, "the place of man on Earth. It is, indeed, an ecological theme" (see interview).

Much of Bitov's prose is based on an urge to reach some kind of clarity and authenticity in the perception and cognition of reality phenomena, to clear the brain from dogmas, stereotypes, and habitual thinking, in order to reach the essentials, i.e. the "reality" of things. As Mikael Klefter continues:

> In this chaos of reflections, hypotheses, and considerations his thoughts about time occupy a prominent place. We follow Bitov's reflections about time as the ideal builder, the historical time and our place in it, its relation to religion, art etc.[57]

Bitov's style differs from that of Kerouac and Aksyonov but, as we shall see, the essence of his considerations about time and place, about the journey reflects attitudes which are similar to the ones found in Kerouac and Aksyonov, and the goal of the quest is the same.

Takoe dolgoe detstvo - Prizyvnyk (Such a Long Childhood -- the Draftee) was written very early (1959-1961) in Bitov's career and, indeed, it shares some youthfulness, or as Bitov probably would say, infantilism with the early works of Gladilin, Kuznetsov, and Aksyonov. It is structured after the same model, which, according to Bitov, is: "The protagonist, having left school or finished something else is thrown into real life" (see interview). The 18 year old Kiril Kapustin has been expelled from the technological institute where he studied. He, nevertheless, joins his co-students on a journey to the mines (where they are going to work as practical training) somewhere North of the Polar Circle. When the summer is over, the rest of them go back to study but Kiril stays on. Having worked through the winter he is then drafted to the army and in the last scene we see him marching away with the other soldiers.

The physical journey from Leningrad to the North and then further on with the soldiers is parallelled by what Mikael Klefter calls a "biological" journey away from childhood and into future manhood. The physical journey is not very important in the novel except for the fact that it takes Kiril out of his childhood environment and sends him out in life where he is on his own.

Kiril is depicted as an outsider, a loner who is not able to understand or come to terms with either himself or his surroundings. He is thrown into life (expelled from school) but is not capable of making any decisions. As Erik Kulavig has noted, one senses that:

> he is governed more by coincidences and circumstances than by rational thinking and planning. As is typical of Bitov's protagonists he too follows a set pattern of reaction, which takes effect when the problems get too obtrusive or when he is forced to make a choice. He then usually reacts by repressing reality from his consciousness creating an intellectual vacuum and "thinking of nothing."[58]

In the mining community Kiril is confronted with the reality of work, of love, of tragedy but, in all cases, his perception of reality is that of "kak vo sne" (as in a dream-like state). For example, when he goes to the hospital to visit a dying friend and colleague (who has had an accident at work) he is not capable of comprehending the reality of the situation or to convey his true feelings of compassion.

Slowly he gets engulfed in the safe but boring routine of "work -- Galia -- Galia -- work" (Galia is the girl he goes out with), and he is still not able to establish a "real" relationship with either of them. As Kulavig points out:

> as something unusual for a Soviet novel, Such a Long Childhood shows, in

> different ways, the lack of authenticity in life, and it is demonstrated how the monotony of daily life (in the industrialized age): work --leisure -- work restrains any display of life activity. In one of the last chapters the author lets his protagonist, who is portrayed as being alienated from society, have a foreboding of "another existence", which involves an unknown oneness. Thus, he suggests a certain reason for hope.[59]

At the end of the novel Kiril is examined by doctors at the drafting office in a section which in sharply critical overtones shows the grotesquely degrading and dehumanizing effect of the whole situation. He is declared fit for the army but does not feel fit for anything. He has grown up (vzroslost') but that does not mean that he is "mature" (zrelyi):

> Years pass -- graying adulthood arrives, but no maturity will be in sight. And it is too early to talk about any healthy influence of productive work on the young soul, or to say that this is how you find your place in life. That is also just one stage, and you don't find your place in life this way. The most important thing is still how you differ from others, what makes you new and incompatible with others, that is to say, what you have brought to this life.[60]

The biological journey towards maturity has not ended yet, and it is not clear whether Bitov believes Kiril will ever to become a harmonious individual. He does give us some insight into what he perceives as the ideal but, probably utopian, condition of the human consciousness -- a condition which a person only reaches in short moments:

> This condition lasts for a while and then passes. And then it is the same life again. But it is no longer quite the same once you have known this condition. This is the highest level of human happiness ... Suddenly everything is clear to you. The smell of the forest, the smell of soil, the smell of the great waters and the smell of snow. And their tastes. A grasshopper screeches, the light plays under a tree and there is a forest of grass before your eyes. And their meaning. Grass and sky -- the world is momentary, the world is eternal, the world is tiny, the world is endless. And the first world is equal to the other world.
> The world is vast. And what is one man in it?
> And suddenly it seems that the life of a man in this world can only be measured by one such eruption. That is the beginning of everything creative in the world. It is such an individual and lonely feeling, but only it can unite us with the world. And it is this feeling which makes one person different from the other.[61]

As in Kerouac and Aksyonov, the ideal state of the consciousness is a state in which reality is perceived clearly and with authenticity, when you feel the oneness of the present with eternity. Only then have you matured. Bitov is, unfortunately, very pessimistic about the prospects of people reaching this state -- it is doubtful that Kiril ever will. The last paragraph of the novel depicts a highly metaphorical journey, the journey of Kiril through life, as he marches along in ranks with other identical draftees -- still not a mature individual, still just one of the masses of identical grown-ups, marching mechanically through life:

> the ranks are moving and if you look at them a little from above, a little from the side, all the people are absolutely identical. A man leaves to join the ranks, to walk down the road with all the others. And then he is invisible.[62]

Odna strana -- puteshestvie molodogo cheloveka (One Country -- the Journey of a Young Man, 1960) is Bitov's first experiment with the genre of semi-fictional travel sketches or travel memoirs which he later continued in Armenian Lessons. Here he tells the story of a young student from the mining institute in Leningrad travelling to Tashkent to practice in the mines during the summer. It is partly autobiographical -- Bitov himself graduated from the mining institute and went to work in different parts of the Soviet Union, and during the War he lived in Tashkent. The narrative is full of detailed descriptions of the journey itself and of things and events on the road and, especially, in Tashkent. As usual, it is all intertwined with the narrator's thoughts and considerations about a whole range of issues, such as Asian culture and mentality, the cultural clash between East and West. One of the central themes is the nature of the journey.

The introduction includes an account on how the narrator, as a child, wanted to become a great explorer and globetrotter, and how he used to dream about Asia. And now he is actually going there. During the journey and the stay in Tashkent his expectations are fully confirmed, but in the end he admits that: "Traveling widens one's horizon. That is true. But what this wider horizon does, is to give you a broader vision of your own country."[63]

Having returned to Leningrad he starts reflecting on that peculiar restlessness that makes people leave home and then, having left, want to return again:

> It is an odd feeling to be a homebody and a wanderer at the same time. When I am leaving, it seems to me that I am a born homebody and that I should never have gotten into all this. The parting leads to a reevaluation of values. What you left behind becomes more and more dear to you. Or rather, not a reevaluation, but a return of values. If only I could return. . . Now I understand and appreciate everything. I know what is dearest of all to me and what I need. And then I come home. And I do not at all understand what is drawing me away from home. . . The urge to see something new and to part once more with

everything familiar in order to evaluate it again and to love it more?[64]

Puteshestvie k drugu detstva -- nasha biografiia (Journey to a Childhood Friend -- Our Biography, 1963-65) is one of the most important of Bitov's journeys, because it not only discusses the hero of the New Wave in retrospective but also deals with the concept of journey as related to the problems of time and action. This time the journey is back in time, to childhood -- a journey which is parallelled by a process of reevaluating the values which had developed during childhood and youth. The journey backwards in time is caused by a physical journey from Leningrad to Kamchatka. The narrator is a promising young writer whom the editor of a journal convinces to go on a 'kommandirovka' in order to find a real "positive hero". The only one the writer can think of is his own childhood friend Genrikh who is now a famous scientist, studying volcanoes on the far-away island of Kamchatka. The whole novel takes place on the road to Kamchatka, in airplanes and waiting at airports. Through the narrator's recollections and 'fictional' excerpts from articles about Genrikh's daring life, we learn about his own life and the nature of his relationship with Genrikh. And slowly it turns out that this Socialist Realist "positive hero" is not at all likable as a human being.

On the journey, which takes 72 hours, we follow the writer as a neutral observer of events and people. He meets a number of people in whom he recognizes various types. Fragments of human lives, dramatic conflicts, phenomena and events pass by the reader in a steady flow. And he starts thinking about the character of the man he is going to meet and depict in an essay. Genrikh has all his life been seen as some sort of a superhuman heroic being by his friends, by his parents, teachers, girls, colleagues, and now he is a typical Soviet hero. But, thinking back, the narrator understands that the heroic deeds of Genrikh have never been for the benefit of anyone but Genrikh. As Olga Hassanoff writes:

> "Ne chelovek -- simvol!" (not a human being but a symbol -- PD) -- says the narrator about his friend and remembers his own very ordinary life ...]This positive hero of incredible and rather mindless endurance and singlemindedness was indeed a childhood model to the generation portrayed in Bitov's works. They read about such heroes in books, discussed them at school meetings, and watched films about them.[65]

The novel marks not only a break with the positive hero of Socialist Realism but also with the admiration which many of Bitov's contemporaries felt for the heroes of Hemingway and Jack London. In an imagined conversation with Genrikh the narrator says: "When I see signs of power and masculinity and life based on that, I always feel terribly weak. The masculinity of Jack London and Hemingway does not convince me."[66]

Here again we are dealing with the problem of authenticity of perception. All his life the narrator has admired Genrikh and seen him as an hero, but now he realizes how he has been deceived and how empty heroism is. At one point he watches a man at an airport who without hesitation comes to the help of a total stranger. To the narrator this "action"(postupok) is much more important than all of Genrikh's heroic but meaningless "podvigi" (achievements, deeds):

> Time delivers its word. And that word is ACTION. The ability to act -- that is the basic sign of a man ... Actions are called for every day and are exclusively rare. As for great achievements. . Of course there have been, there are, and there will be achievements in our amazing age. The action is the realisation of the man. It is apparently unassuming but exclusively hard to perform. The achievement requires the right circumstances and expects a reward.[67]

In this way the narrator arrives at a new set of values, and he realizes that the journey and the reflections have been a journey of self-discovery more than a journey to visit Genrikh, and that the only thing he has in common with him is TIME. Thus, once again Bitov is back at the problems of time and the relation between man and time and his own urge for a life outside time. And this problem he takes up again in the next work to be discussed.

Uroki Armenii -- Puteshestvie v nebol'shuiu stranu (Armenian Lessons -- A Journey to a Small Country, 1967-69) is Bitov's masterpiece in which his peculiar semifictional travel genre reaches its highest potential. Bitov, rather modestly, describes it as the creation of a model of a small nation (see interview), but it is much more than that. It is, among other things, a declaration of love for the Armenian culture and its original version of christianity. The narrator (again a travelling writer, Bitov himself) admits that:

> I am discovering that I'm no longer travelling in Armenia or in Russia, but in this book of mine. It may be that this is some kind of fantastical country which I have thought up on the basis of certain impressions -- by comparison ...]This book is, after all, an act of love. Love doesn't lie. The desire for love lies.[68]

Above all, the journey to Armenia is a spiritual journey. Here, for the first time we find Bitov openly expressing his innermost feelings, emotions and beliefs -- feelings which are deeply saturated with reflections on time in relation to history, culture, nature, religion, in short, to "the place of man on Earth".

Like Aksyonov's experiences in Sviiazhsk, Bitov has religious sensations when confronted with old churches in Armenia, and he immediately starts considering the role of history and time in relation to eternity:

> I suddenly understood that time alone does not create ruins. . . ."Time destroys and time builds." Even in the Bible "to destroy" comes first. Time only manages to slightly embellish the work of human hands, adding a softened, idyllic touch to the destruction, which inclines one to philosophizing about time. And in this state the ruins stand forever.[69]

This thought makes him express the ideal relation to time, which he has been searching for through all his travellings:

> I dream of living in this very second. In this second, for this second only. Then I would be alive, harmonious and happy. But I live somewhere between the past and present of my own life, in the hope of a future. I want to eliminate the gap between past and present because this gap makes my life unreal, makes it a non-life. I keep hoping that by some miraculous effort I will find myself exclusively in the present and then I will never let go of it again, and my life would again be continuous from birth to death.[70]

This is an expression of the same longing for an intense life in harmonious 'oneness' with time, history and nature, that we found in Aksyonov and Kerouac. And in Armenian Lessons this longing is answered by experiences which are religious in nature. The narrator (Bitov) is invited to a wedding by some Armenian friends. At the wedding he finds a natural and harmonious relationship between the physical and the spiritual, between body and soul:

> Eat, drink, praise the Lord! We sit on the same ground, under the same sky, we share with everybody, and we do not ask anything of each other. There is peace on our faces, peace in the world. We, the people, once again surrounded by wonderful life! ... time disappeared for a second, as it can only happen in prayers and in happiness, when God is listening . . .[71]

A similar religious feeling is evoked in him, when for the first time he sees the mountain of Ararat, and this time the feeling reaches ecstatic and oceanic proportions.

"This is the world" and "this is the song of the spheres" he wants to exclaim, when:

> suddenly the closeness was gone and the world beneath me became so endless, deep and boundless that I disappeared and a feeling of flying was born in me.[72]

In concluding this chapter about the quest of the Beat Generation and the New Wave, it must be stressed that the Beat Generation and the New Wave, being disillusioned with the American Dream and "the Slavic Soul," as Patrick Thunderjet calls the Russian parallel to the American Dream, respectively, did in every possible way try to escape from the implementations of these concepts in capitalist/socialist societies. Travelling, madness, alcohol, drugs, ecstasy, and spontaneity in writing, sex, and music are just some of the means of this escape. But the escape soon turns into a search -- the road leads not only away from something. And the road represents another way of life; on the road you live intensely in the present while being in touch with eternity, and you feel that you are getting closer and closer to your goal. The goal of the Beats and the New Wave was a state of consciousness which had been stripped of conventional stereotype thinking, and which was marked by an awareness of a non-linear, spiritual dimension to life.

The heroes of the two movements, certainly, did resolve the Flakerian conflict with parents and society by evasion (social evasion and evasion in space). But the evasion turned out to be much more than an escape. These youngsters engaged in a quest: a quest for a spiritual dimension to life in materialistic society; a quest for authenticity and truthfulness. The journey became a journey into the Self, and the wanderers became prophets with a vision.

3.3. PROSE AS SELF-REVELATION AND VISION.

3.3.1. The Infantilism of a Generation.

In our interview with Andrei Bitov he urged us to take into account the infantilism of the early New Wave. He wanted us to realize that the social phenomenon emerged earlier than the literary wave, and that the writers in the beginning over-romanticized and embellished their own way of life, because:

> These people had been brought up under Stalin and, as such, were not very critical, that is, they understood things simply. Despite the drawbacks and the horrors, a rather pure structure took form, for people are purer, more naive, and ignorant under a totalitarian regime. From 1956 on a spirit of unprecedented, though relative, freedom was presented to them. Logically, they faced the situation with inner purity, inexperience, and artificially created infantilism. (see interview, p. 45)

This is, I think, a very accurate description of the New Wave at the early stage, i. e. in the late 50s, but the question is whether the same is not correct with regard to most new movements. In any case, it was also true of the Beat Generation. The wartime and McCarthyite tendencies had also created a rather pure and innocent structure in the psyche of the generation growing up in the 50s. Certainly, the Beats and Kerouac were depicted as being very infantile, as "know-nothing Bohemians," naive and immature. And, indeed, there was an aura of youthful innocence about Kerouac and the generation he portrayed. There was a tendency to idealistically glorify themselves and to overestimate their own importance, and also their whole movement and the generation which it was said to represent. The autobiographical and confessional character of the writings of the New Wave and the Beat Generation was easily interpreted as egoistical self-glorification but, as we shall see, the closeness between the author and his personae, and the identification with a whole generation were all a result of the quest to reach a more authentic reality through self-revelation.

3.3.2. Kerouac's Confessions of a Generation.

Many of Kerouac's protagonists are characterized by their frantic restlessness and extreme energy. In On The Road he confesses:

> the only ones for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to

> talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars (OTR, 8).

The stress was always on living intensely, here and now, in other words, being in a life of hectic activity. To represent the rejection of materialism, conformity and careerism Kerouac chose the American untouchables, the jazz musician, the drug addict, the poor visionary writer, the hipster and, especially, the hobo. Neal Cassady was the living example of the hobo's approach to life and he became the prototype of many of Kerouac's heroes (e.g. Dean in On the Road and Cody in Visions of Cody) and of some of Ginsberg's mythological figures, for instance, in "Howl." In On the Road, Dean is Kerouac's, that is, the narrator Sal's, alter ego. In the beginning, he is everything the withdrawn Sal, who lives with his aunt (Kerouac's mother), wants to be: energetic, unambitious, naive, "mad" and free. But his energy is, Sal slowly realizes, only energy for its own sake. He is ready to sacrifice everything, family and friends included, in order to continue his mindless moving around. In the words of John Tytell, Dean:

> seems maddened by the urge to be everywhere at the same time, to love several women, to conduct various searches while fulfilling none. So the negative, some might say demonic, aspects of Dean play their role in elevating the character from simply a figure based on Neal Cassady to something much larger in scope, a Promethean version of the holy primitive, a shaman's shaman.[1]

Sal is very much attracted by Dean's "outburst of American joy," but he is not able to escape his own secure middle class background and let go. Kerouac's own life seems to have been like a human implementation of a roman candle exploding like a spider across the stars and this constant release of energy might have caused his early death -- he seems to simply have burned out. But despite the commonly accepted picture of him as a hard-living Bohemian, always drunk, always on the move, he was always seeking security at the same time. As John Tytell puts it:

> Invariably, after each trip and its travail, there was the return to his mother, partly because of the security she represented, but even more because of the writer's need to assimilate his experiences in a place of quiet retreat. Perhaps paradoxically, he lived primarily for words and the rhythms of his work, and not for the bohemian adventures associated with his books.[2]

What made Kerouac a unique chronicler of his generation was not the fact that he was able to register the doings of his friends and associates but the way he perceived them and the fact that one senses the characteristics of an emerging new consciousness in him. As John Clellon Holmes writes:

> His eye was like a fine membrane vibrating between the intolerable pressure of two walls of water: the consciousness flowing outward to absorb everything in the drench of thought; and reality flooding inward to drown everything but the language to describe it.[3]

Holmes too was a chronicler of the Beat Generation, but his Go, which depicts the life of the Beats in New York Bohemian circles, is written with a distance, intellectually evaluating people and events. Holmes has described the difference between himself and Kerouac:

> He is freely contradictory, I tend to be trapped by my own consciousness; he absorbs, I analyze; he is intuitive, I am still mostly cerebral; he muses, I worry; he looks for the perfection in others, and finds existence flawed; I am drawn *toward* the flaw, and believe in life's perfectability. But there is, and was from the beginning, a real and generous affection between us, based on a peculiar sense of kinship -- puzzling, maddening, indescribable -- that has made our relationship oddly fateful for both of us.[4]

The works of Holmes and Kerouac are highly autobiographical; they both depict the lives of themselves and their friends, the difference being that Kerouac relied solely on immediacy and spontaneity. He believed that truth existed in the inner spiritual world only, and therefore the most authentic and true had to be found in relentlessly confessional revelations of the self, in the immediate and spontaneous response of the mind to external stimuli, or, as John Tytell puts it:

> an ecstatic abandonment of conscious control of language, an intuitive response to the inner voice. Such a heightened state usurps normal consciousness with its filtering process, soars beyond the intellectual capabilities of reason and choice and selectivity to achieve what Kerouac called "an undisturbed flow from the mind".[5]

Kerouac did not feel that the existing forms of expression were adequate for his task of revealing the inner "truth". He even rejected the Wolfean/Faulknerian style he had used in The Town and the City because it had not enabled him to reveal what was really on his mind. He had a deeply felt conviction that he had been lying so far. On July 14, 1951, he wrote to Holmes:

> When I get to be so pure you won't be able to bear the thought of my death on a starry night (right now I've nothing to do with stars, I've lied so far) it will be when I'll have come to know and tell the truth (all of it, in every conceivable mask) and yet digress from that to my lyric-alto knowing of this land .... a deep-form bringing together of two ultimate and at-present-conflicting streaks in me.[6]

The feeling of having "lied so far" led him to the theory of spontaneous prose. As I have discussed above (**3.1.**), this theory was highly influenced by Kerouac's interest in bop, but he also compared the act of writing to the "laws of orgasm, Reich's 'beclouding of consciousness'."[7] Another point of origin for Kerouac's theory and, indeed, for his novel The Subterraneans (1953/ published 1959) was Dostoevsky's Notes from the Underground. Kerouac was convinced that spontaneous confessions would lead away from lying, i.e. to truth.

The Underground Man's retreat from the world and his confessions -- so full of guilt, self-doubt and scepticism -- as well as Reich's theory are models for the narrator/protagonist/ aspiring writer Leo Percepied:

> it was the reading, the sudden illuminated glad wondrous discovery of Wilhelm Reich, his book The Function of the Orgasm, clarity as I had not seen in a long time ... the clarity here tho was scientific, beautiful, true -- something I'd always known and closely indeed connected to my 1948 sudden notion that the only thing that really mattered was love, the lovers going to and fro beneath the boughs in the Forest of Arden of the World, here magnified and at the same time microcosmed and pointed in and maled into: orgasm -- the reflexes of the orgasm -- you can't be healthy without normal sex love and orgasm.[8]

The novel is highly autobiographical and confessional, based on a short but hectic love-affair that Kerouac had with a black girl (called Mardou Fox in the novel) who lived among the hipsters and Bohemians (the 'subterraneans') in Greenwich Village. Written in three days, on benzedrine, the novel is also truly spontaneous. And, as Warren Tallman, who has analyzed the structure of the (often several pages long) sentences of the novel, has shown:

> The narrative line follows the brief love-affair between Percepied and Mardou while the improvised details move, as the title would suggest, down into the clutter of their lives among the guilts and shames which come up from subterranean depths to steal their love from them. The truth is in the

improvisations.[9]

Like the Underground Man, Percepied is not able to conquer his own guilt and shame and is therefore pulled back "into the clutter" of his own life. He is not able to get through to the real Mardou but keeps imagining her exotic background and dreaming about her being with others. In the end, after he has let her down several times, this dream comes through, and the final lines of the novel are: "And I go home having lost her love. And write this book."

In the centre of the novel is Kerouac's, and Leo's, exploration of the relationship between reality and dream. As Gerald Nicosia writes, "In and its variations -- inside, inkept, inward -- are key words,"[10] and Leo and Mardou often reveal and discuss their dreams. The importance that Kerouac attributes to dreams is reflected in the associative and digressive structure of the novel. Thematically, however, the influence from Buddhist thinking is evident in the idea of dream-realization. Nicosia writes:

> The novel's insistence that mind authors the world is nonetheless a very Eastern concept and many of Kerouac's key words -- void, dream, mind, essence -- are common to Asian religions.[11]

It is important to notice that none of Leo's dreams come true, except the one about Mardou's infidelity. The only way he can cope with his fears and suppressed tensions is by writing. The belief in the therapeutic function of writing is a parallel to modern psychoanalytic therapy -- self-revelation. And dreams are important sources of access to the subconscious, i.e. to what Kerouac percieved as the truth, and, as he says in the foreword to his collection of dreams, Book of Dreams (1961):

> because the fact that everybody in the world dreams every night ties all mankind together shall we say in one unspoken Union and also proves that the world is really transcendental which the Communists do not believe because they think their dreams are 'unrealities' instead of visions of what they saw in their sleep.[12]

One of the dreams in Book of Dreams relates this "unspoken Union" to the subculture of Russia. Kerouac dreamt that:

> I'm in Russia among the teenagers, in a little sort of candy store -- I've journeyed far, this is really Russia, nobody knows -- "Wow! what will they say when they hear about the teenagers of Russia!" -- There's a colored kid with a

> funny Raskolnikov visored trolley conductor cap and crazy Russian hair sticking out, he's the hipster of the gang -- There's a neat redhaired kid in a buttondown sweater just like a kid in an American Hi School -- There are two girls -- It is dark, cold, thrilling on the great northern street outside, chimney pots smoke -- The kids jabber in Russian as I in the eternity high dig them .... Russia's young hipster with the stovepipe Raskolnikov Trolley-visored cap is a Negro like La Negra of Mexico, now 14, or 16, -- his hair sticks out and down from his sooty hat like straw, like a "Mardou" wearing a trolley wiper's cap in Russia with a whole street behind her, only an excited boy interested in girls and Russian weed --[13]

Dreams and self-revelation are not just seen as being of therapeutic value by Kerouac and the Beats. The extremely high importance of the 'self' to the prose of Kerouac is not just a result of narcissism and egomania. As John Tytell puts it: "While the idea of self is the Beat focal point, it represents only a beginning, an involvement to be transcended."[14]

Self-revelation is seen as the writer's mission, the writer as a prophet. As Kerouac has Japhy Ryder (Gary Snyder) say in The Dharma Bums:

> East'll meet West anyway. Think what a great world revolution will take place when East meets West finally, and it'll be guys like us that can start the thing. Think of millions of guys all over the world with rucksacks on their backs tramping around the back country and hitchhiking and bringing the word down to everybody.[15]

Besides being prophetic, as far as the 'rucksack revolution' of the 60s is concerned, this statement reflects what the Beats saw as the purpose of art: to change the world not through politics but by revealing (trough art) the visions of a new consciousness, in other words, they saw themselves as prophets of spiritual liberation. The writer was a seer and a prophet, a shaman who could see the deeper truth in things and whose mind made the connection to the sublime. This is why every conscious and unconscious thought had to be recorded and was seen as being of great significance. And this is why we find a unique textual unity in Kerouac. His life is chronicled and mythologized in all of his books, each of which is just one more chapter in the life of Kerouac. Kerouac called his books the Duluoz Legend (Jack Duluoz being himself) as if it were the life of a saint; and many of the individual books have almost religious titles,for instance Vanity of Duluoz (1967), Desolation Angels (1965), and The Dharma Bums (the 'truth' bums).

3.3.3. New Wave Confessional Prose.

There is a clear parallel between the Beat Generation and the New Wave in the fact that they tied the movements so consistently to a specific generation. They saw themselves as spokesmen and spiritual leaders of the postwar generation. Another parallel is the closeness between author and protagonist. The prose of the New Wave too was highly autobiographical -- the subjective "I" was always the focal point of the author's attention, be it Bitov, Aksyonov, or Gladilin. And, like the Beats, the New Wave writers displayed a tendency to sublimate the ordinary, to mythologize themselves and their protagonists, hence the titles A Chronicle of the Times of Viktor Podgursky, Continuation of a Legend, etc. However, compared to Kerouac, there is always a touch of irony and self-irony present in the works of Gladilin and Aksyonov, and this is, perhaps, one of the most important differences between the two movements.

One of the most important similarities is, I think, the fact that the writers of both movements perceived the surrounding world as "unreal" and inauthentic. They had a strong feeling that writers so far, themselves included, had not been able to tell the "truth" about the new times. Consequently, they were obsessed with an urge to tell the truth (as we have seen). And they all felt that the truth ("reality" as Bitov puts it) had to be going on somewhere else, that it had to be found within themselves.

This is why Gladilin calls his prose "confessional" (ispovedal'naia -- see interview) -- only confessions of the self could reveal the truth about himself and about his generation. Let us have a closer look at this generation as Gladilin perceives it.

Like Bitov and Aksyonov, Gladilin states that the urge to move was the core of the generation: "The lines from Eugene Onegin -- 'A restlessness took hold of him, desire for a change of scene' -- could be applied to our whole generation."[16] And he stresses again and again, that to his generation the 'reality' depicted in previous (Socialist Realist) literature was false:

> I read these books, listened to the songs, watched the movies.... and choked with indignation. It was all lies, fake. For my contemporaries everything was different. Life greeted us with a sock in the mouth.[17]

The writers and poets of the New Wave were almost all born in the early 30s: Aksyonov in 1932, Gladilin in 1935, Bitov in 1937, Evtushenko in 1933, Voznesensky in 1933, Akhmadulina in 1937, Okudzhava in 1924, which means that they were the first generation to be fully Soviet, born in the Soviet period and raised during the worst period of repression and terror in the USSR. As Gladilin writes: "We grew up in the era of the struggle against 'cosmopolitism, servility, the cult of the foreign'. The works of Zoshchenko and Akhmatova were presented as symbols of moral decay and ideological depravity."[18]

Gladilin describes the life of a typical representative of his generation (Petya Ivanov) in the following way, as a person who:

> was born in 1933 - 1938 in Moscow, Leningrad, Tambov... Primarily an urbanite, primarily a Russian. During the war he was evacuated to Kazan, Novosibirsk, Tashkent .... Sometimes, Petya Ivanov didn't have a father or mother. Either they died during the war or were somewhere else, but where exactly -- one did not ask .... In the seventh or eighth grade, Petya Ivanov wrote an essay on the book How the Steel was Tempered and entered Komsomol .... the accursed West was constantly decaying .... Like all the Soviet people, Petya Ivanov took hard the death of the Great Leader and Teacher on March 5, 1953 .... On the kolkhoz, they gave out rotten cabbage for work days, in the camps, millions of political prisoners languished, but Petya Ivanov knew nothing of all that, though he did know that the country was waging a war with *stilyagi*. In June 1954, Lavrentii Beriia, "loyal friend and colleague of the Great Leader and Teacher" suddenly turned out to be an Anglo-Americano-Japanese spy .... Tourists started coming from "the rotten West," not at all like exhausted unfortunates .... Petya Ivanov retained a great many illusions, but when Soviet tanks rumbled down the streets of Budapest .... Petya Ivanov understood that the rest of his life was not going to be strewn with roses. Petya Ivanov clenched his fists, hid his hands in his pockets and gave them the finger. As yet, this was his first revolt against the authorities. . .[19]

This is the generation the New Wave represented and identified with. It is important to note that despite the apparent "normalcy" (or typicality) of their backgrounds, many of the New Wave writers were outcasts of society. The parents of several of them had been executed (Okudzhava's father) or sent to the camps in Siberia (Okudzhava's mother, both of Aksyonov's parents, and Evtushenko's grandfather) leaving the children to the terrible Homes for Children of the Enemies of the People.

As a result, as Gladilin writes, the system had succeeded in raising a generation of naive and infantile believers and Komsomol members. Only after Stalin's death did the truth begin to appear to them, and they started developing from conformists into rebellious youth. And this was exactly the starting point of New Wave literature.

The protagonists as well as the writers were indeed very naive and infantile in the beginning, as Bitov and Gladilin point out. They were convinced that they were able to change society by finding the truth and revealing it to the public. And they believed that now was the time, that Khrushchev's liberalizations would allow them to do so. They blindly believed that literature could make a difference.

Aksyonov's The Steelbird (Stal'naia ptitsa, 1965, not published in the Soviet Union) is a good example of this. It is the story of how a mysterious creature, Popenkov -- partly human, partly a metallic bird -- turns up in a house in Moscow and, with the help of supernatural powers takes over the house, and finally how he falls from power. The title refers to the Russian word Stalin ('stal" for steel) and the work is, at one level, a warning against the emerging Neo-Stalinism in the beginning of the 60s, but on another level it is, as I have shown elsewhere, a "parable about power-lust and the struggle against spiritual emptiness."[20] What is noteworthy in this connection is, however, the importance Aksyonov attributed to literature and the youthful subculture.

As in A Ticket to the Stars, the back-yard of the house is seen as a carnivalistic yard of freedom. Here the people assemble, exchange opinions, discuss forbidden works of art, make caricatures of officialdom (the Steel Bird); young stiliagis and teenagers in jeans and with guitars in their hands play jazz and 'rock'n'roll, ride motorbikes and fall in love. Here, among the nonconformists, who in the end turn out to be able to fight the Steel Bird, we find Vaska Axiomov (Aksyonov) and Tolik Proglotilin (Gladilin) reading another member of the "young prose," Akhmed Samopalov's new book Look Back in Delight . Axiomov and Proglotilin joins the worker Fuchinian and the teenagers in a confrontation with the Steelbird and his relatives Koka and Goga (probably the KGB):

> There began the self-defense without arms. The relatives' Argentinian pocket knives swished through the air, but collected nothing. Fuchinian, Proglotilin and Axiomov, remembering their street fighting days, pulled at the relatives' legs and punched them on the noses. The relatives' tears and snot rose like fountains to the blue sky, but nevertheless knives are knives, and blood flowed, and they drove our lads to the edge of the roof.
> Suddenly there was a crash to the rear of the relatives. The four Samopalov brothers were crawling along the roof, the writer, the artist, the motorcyclist and big beat.[21]

Before the battle is over the people are alotted a new house and life goes on, but the Steel Bird is still a potential threat.

Although the scene is depicted with the irony and self-irony that is so typical of Aksyonov, the importance attached to the New Wave is, nevertheless, very high. The writers have the power and the duty to change society and to fight spiritual corruption. But what are their means to do so?

Satire and irony, as seen in The Steel Bird were only some of the means. Being deeply rooted in Socialist Realism and Russian literary tradition, the New Wave writers firmly believed in their own social responsibility and significance, but in sharp contrast with the ruling doctrine about Socialist Realism with its stress on 'realistically mirroring reality', in accordance with the political line of the Party, they found the answer by turning inwards. To Aksyonov, Gladilin and Bitov changing society was not a political task but a spiritual mission. "Subjectivity" -- for which they were constantly blamed -- was to them the road to authenticity.

In It's Time, My Friend, It's Time, Aksyonov revealed the secret of his writings:

> It seemed as if I was discovering the secret. I had to write without holding anything back, and I was not to be afraid of the paper, for it was my closest friend. If I hid anything, it was bound to crawl out later, and then it would be in a funny form like a caricature. Finally, writing was what I needed most of all for myself, it was what helped me; every minute of the day it turned me into a ball of energy. There must be no deception in this business. Face to face with the paper, I was not to be ashamed of myself, nor of my stupidity, nor of my alleged feelings. I'm a simple man, and I get on easily with anyone I meet; I'm like everybody else. And I'm necessary to them, that's what's so funny, and if I don't realise this I can't do anything.[22]

Which sounds like the 'essentials' of spontaneous prose -- self-revelation and confession are key-words. And, dreams, as in Kerouac, play a vital role in Aksyonov's writings providing access to the inner worlds of the protagonists and the deeper meaning of the works. Along with other means of 'self-revelation', such as musical improvisations (Sabler's jazz-rhythmical-prose in The Burn, and the "solos for cornet-a-piston" in The Steel Bird) and rhythmical prose digressions (In Search of a Genre and The Heron), dreams, nightmares and hallucinations convey the inner core of the works. In Surplussed Barrelware (A Novella with Exaggerations and Dreams) it is through the individual's dreams and the "Last Common Dream" that we learn about the real goals of the protagonists and their innermost longings and feelings.

The Burn is full of dreams, hallucinations, nightmarish memories, and dream-like sections, which, taken together, sum up, in a condensed form (as series of images, dialogues, and concepts), the author's deeply personal, subconscious perception of events. The seven page long "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM AFTER FOUR BOTTLES OF EXTRA, BROUGHT BY SERGEANT IVAN MIGAYEV FROM THE KAZAN STATION TO THE STUDIO OF THE SCULPTOR RADIUS APOLLINARIEVICH KHVASTISHCHEV," for instance, consists of a series of seemingly disconnected images and events (in actual fact they are connected by associations), which reveal the author's subconscious response not only to his period as a practicing medical doctor and his "present" situation as a disillusioned and "beaten" writer, but also to his own sexuality:

> I went out cautiously, pressing my hand to my mouth, and ran away. There rushed toward me, but without moving from the spot, a dozen pairs of eyes, silently imploring me to save their owners from suffering, from pain and shame, from the pangs that accompany the early stages of dread diseases. "Come on now, old lady, with your terrible hump, uncover your back! Don't be afraid, dear, don't cry. It won't hurt -- I am a doctor and clinician!" The clinician saw an enormous abscess, which had swelled up like a transparent planet: Arteries, branching out in all directions like a map of the Amazon, throbbed violently, while on the edge, in lymph nodes swollen like sausages, an explosion was building up, and a scream was about to burst out of the old woman's feeble throat. What was I to do?[23]

Aksyonov's writings are indeed self-revealing, although he tries to "detach myself somehow" (see interview, p. 31), only metaphorically reflecting the internal condition of his own life, for instance, by making the "I" of "The Village of Sviiazhsk" a basketball coach instead of a writer. There is a lot of autobiography in such works as Colleagues (about his life as a medical doctor), Surplussed Barrels (based on an experience he had), The Heron (based on a real incident), "It's a Pity You Weren't with Us" (his friendship with Ernst Neizvestny, later this friendship was also depicted in The Burn), and "The Village of Sviiazhsk." The autobiographical content has become increasingly clear over the years. The Burn is about his own childhood and his life in the 50s - 60s, and Say Cheese is about the Metropole affair. But while taking his own life as a starting point, Aksyonov has always linked his heroes to his generation and to his friends in the New Wave.

Thus, Edward Mozejko is right in pointing out the textual unity of Aksyonov's works, despite the apparent fragmentation and dissection of the world depicted; this unity is, I believe, based on the autobigraphical character of his writings. As Mozejko writes:

> I am speaking of what I suggested be called *modern pictorial representation*; its organizing principle rests on the opposition of unity vs. a dissected world. It has been said that Aksënov's poetic world in his later works is fragmented. However, one cannot deny it a certain unity. The same characters, symbols, places recur in the novels and plays he wrote during the seventies ...]They lend to this literary corpus a sense of textual unity. One gets the impression that Aksënov writes one text ....[24]

Aksyonov's heroes have developed as a parallel to his own life -- the later a work's date, the older its characters -- from the rebellious teenage writers and artists *in spe* (A Ticket to the Stars) and the medical doctors (Colleagues), over the searching writer/artist (It's Time, My Friend, It's Time and "It's a Pitty You Weren't with Us") to the disillusioned artist (In Search of a Genre) -- the whole development of the generation is reflected in The Burn -- and the soon to be emigre writer (Say Cheese). As Boris Briker writes:

> Aksënov's contemporaries are much more than just contemporaries. Most often they share a common or similar past, common memories, a common nostalgia. The conflict of two worlds that Aksënov depicts in The Burn and the short story "Victory" is often presented precisely as the conflict of generations. Aksënov assumes that the older generation is the one that has passed through youth in the Komsomol of the thirties and service in the security organs during wartime, producing the coat-check clerks and subway attendants of the 1970s, while the younger generation, the one that finished college in the late 50s and yielded the principal participants in the New Wave of the 60s, produced the jazz musicians, the writers of modern prose and the builders of the Zhelezka.[25]

In In Search of a Genre, Aksyonov depicts not only the despair and disillusionment of the heroes after the Wave has gone, but also their common ideals and the common set of values in which they still believe. And he furthermore links these ideals and values of his generation to the same generation all over the world. Fifteen 'genre' performers -- the only ones left -- from all over the world gather in order to perform a true miracle. Before going to work they confess to each other:

> "Who of us has experienced happiness in love these last years?"
> It so happened that all of them had.
> "Who of us has sunk, perished, swum out and crawled up unto the bank?"
> It so happened they all had.
> "Who of us has betrayed his youth for any sum of money?"
> There were no such men among them.
> "Who has been depressed and has raged in despair?"
> Each of them had.
> "Who has acquired brazenness, cruelty and swinishness in his wanderings?"
> None of us had acquired any of these treasures.[26]

3.4. CONCLUSION: PART THREE.

Aksyonov's utopian joining of hands with 14 other "genre performers" is almost a symbol of his own urge to disregard geo-physical borders. He used to belong to a literary movement -- the New Wave -- which emerged without regard to an obstacle as enormous as the iron curtain. The 15 genre performers belong to a generation of the international community, all joining in the fight for spiritual liberation -- a liberation of contemporary man from the burdens of mass-society, which they saw as closely related to the conformity of the masses, the strict control by the rulers, to blind materialism, and paranoid militarism.

By the late 50s, the pendulum had swung and left the notion of man as a social creature, a product of socio-political and economical circumstances. The new and progressive (in the true sense of the word) literary generation, in both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., was the first to sense the emerging new consciousness, which included an awareness of a spiritual dimension to life on Earth and the notion of man as a unique individual created by God.

'Self', 'subjectivity', 'feelings', and 'soul' were key-words in the poetic universe of Kerouac and the Beats as well as Aksyonov, Bitov and Gladilin. Their response to the problems of society was not to join political parties or to depict social conditions realistically in their works, but to turn inwards. The stress was on the individual and his inner world, rather than society and the material world.

They attempted to widen their own consciousness, to develop a non-linear way of perceiving in order to study their own subconscious inner world, believing that this would bring forth prophetic visions about a better and more authentic reality. This was their way of expressing social responsibility.

As we have seen, the themes of revolt and search, as well as the ideals and concepts of art were very similar in the prose of the two movements. There were, however, essential differences too.

First of all, there will always be differences due to the different personalities of the writers. But such differences exist within the movements as well -- for instance, the difference between Kerouac and Holmes, as outlined by Holmes above, which parallels the difference between Aksyonov and Bitov. Kerouac and Aksyonov seem to be more spontaneous, sensitive and involved in their writing, whereas Holmes and Bitov tend to distance themselves from characters and events and to intellectualize in a rather dry manner.

Secondly, with regard to fundamental differences between the movements, we have to look into the conditions in which they existed.

One such fundamental difference is that the Russians, due to the censorship, could not say everything straight out (except when they did not expect to get published in the Soviet Union). They had to cheat the censors by using aesopian language and symbols which would be understood by their readers, in order to express basically the same protest and aspirations as the Beat Generation.

Another fundamental difference is the label they put on their spiritual search. The Beats turned to Buddhist religion, reacting against their Christian background, because the Christian church was too closely connected with the Establishment and society. The New Wave, on the other hand, reacted against the atheist philosophy of the state and the parents by turning to Christianity. Only later did Eastern religions find a way into their writings.

Despite these differences, however, I believe to have found sufficient signs, indicating that the two movements -- at least as far as prose goes -- belonged to similar literary trends.

Footnotes: Part Three.

3.1. Carnival and Subculture: The Nature of the Revolt.

1. Leslie Fiedler, "The Eye of Innocence", here quoted from H.A. Grunwald, ed., Salinger: A Critical and Personal Portrait, (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 230-31.

2. Dan Wakefield, "The Search for Love", Ibid., 180.

3. R.A. Hipkis, Jack Kerouac: Profet of the New Romanticism, (Lawrence: The Regent Press of Kansas, 1976), 95.

4. Ibid., 96.

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7. Aleksandar Flaker, Modelle der Jeans Prosa: Zu literarischen Opposition bei Plenzdorf im osteuropäischen Romankontext, translated by H. Zimmermann, (Kronberg: Scriptor, 1975), 25.

8. Ibid., 26.

9. Danish slavist Mikael Klefter has applied the Jeans Prose paradigma to the Soviet "young prose", in particular to Aksyonov; see M. Klefter, "Tressernes 'Unge Prosa' i Sovjetunionen og den såkaldte 'Jeans Prosa': en sammenligning", Slavica Othiniensia, 6, (Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1983), 3-23.

10. Jack Kerouac, The Town And The City, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 371.

11. Gerald Nicosia, Memory Babe - A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac, (New York: Grove Press, 1983), 310.

12. Jack Kerouac, The Town And The City, 408.

13. Ibid., 412.

14. Ibid., 422.

15. Ibid., 424.

16. Ibid., 89.

17. Ibid., 94.

18. Ibid., 499.

19. Iurii Kazakov, "Goluboe i zelenoe", Goluboe i zelenoe: rasskazy i ocherky, (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1963), 84.

20. Anatolii Kuznetsov, The Journey, translated by W.F. Butler, (New York: Transnational, 1984), 1.

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22. A. Gladilin, The Making and Unmaking of a Soviet Writer, translated by David Lapeza, (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 29.

23. Ibid., 29.

24. A. Gladilin, "Khronika vremen Viktora Podgurskogo", Iduschii vperedi: povesti, (Moscow: TS.K.V.L.K.S.M., 1962), 145, 148, 150.

25. Ibid., 161-2.

26. Ibid., 167.

27. Ibid., 191.

28. Ibid., 163.

29. 'left-wing' meaning nonconformistic.

30. Anatolii Gladilin, Pervyi den' novogo goda: povesti i rasskazy, (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 58.

31. Ibid., 105.

32. Ibid., 107.

33. Ibid., 102.

34. Ibid., 38.

35. Ibid., 16.

36. Ibid., 22.

37. Ibid., 56-7.

38. Ibid., 61-63.

39. Ibid., 63.

40. Ibid., 93.

41. V. Aksyonov, "Molodye o sebe", Voprosy literatury, 9, (Moscow, september 1962), 118.

42. V. Aksenov, A Ticket to the Stars, translated by A.R. MacAndrew, (New York: Signet, 1963), 47.

43. M. Klefter, "Tressernes 'unge prosa'...", op. cit., 17.

44. V. Aksenov, A Ticket to the Stars, op. cit., 175-6.

45. V. Aksyonov, It's Time, My Friend, It's Time, translated by O. Stevens, (London: MacMillan, 1969), 65.

46. Ibid., 60.

47. Ibid., 222.

48. Ibid., 28, 67, 110.

49. Ibid., 213-14.

50. Ibid., 178.

51. Ibid., 24.

52. Ibid., 49.

53. Ibid., 80.

54. Jack Kerouac, "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose", here quoted from Jack Kerouac, On the Road: Text and Criticism, edited by Scott Donaldson, (New York: Viking, 1979), 531.All references to the novel are to this edition, in the following called On The Road.

55. Ibid., 53.

56. Warren Tallman, "Kerouac's sound", Ibid., 513-19.

57. Jack Kerouac, On the Road, Ibid., 196-7.

58. Warren Tallman, Ibid., 521.

59. Ibid., 524.

60. Jack Kerouac, On the Road, Ibid., 199.

61. Ibid., 200.

62. Ibid., 201.

63. Ibid., 239.

64. Ibid., 208-9.

65. John Clellon Holmes, The Horn, (New York: Random House, 1958), 155.

66. Timothy Pogachar, "Vassily Aksyonov and the American Counterculture", unpublished paper, presented at the 1981 ATSEEL meeting. Kindly provided by the author.

67. Vassily Aksyonov, The Burn, translated by M. Glenny, (New York: Random House, 1984), 34.

68. Ibid., 69.

69. This discussion on jazz in Aksyonov is partly taken from my article: "Some Literary Roots of Aksënov's Writings: Affinities and Parallels", in E. Mozejko, B. Briker, and P. Dalgård, eds., Vasiliy Pavlovich Aksenov: A Writer in Quest of Himself, (Ohio: Slavica, 1987), 80-81.

70. Dick Hebdige, Subculture: The Meaning of Style, (London: Methuen, 1979), 17.

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72. Ibid., 47.

73. Ibid., 49.

74. Ibid., 48.

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76. Ibid., 113.

77. Ibid., 146.

78. Ibid., 253.

79. Ibid., 188.

80. I. Belova (pseudonym), "Pokolenie utrativshee svoikh prozaikov", Sintaksis, 11, (Paris 1983), 71.

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88. See John Tytell, "The Joy of On The Road", in On the Road, op. cit., 425-7.

89. C.G. Vopat, "Jack Kerouac's On the Road: A Re-evaluation", Ibid., 450.

90. V. Aksyonov, The Burn, op. cit., 468.

91. Ibid., 376-78.

92. Ibid., 123.

93. Ibid., 123-24.

94. Ibid., 526.

95. John Clellon Holmes, "The Philosophy of the Beat Generation", On The Road, op. cit., 369.

96. V. Aksyonov, The Burn, op. cit.,124.

97. Jack Kerouac, "The Origins of the Beat Generation", On the Road, op. cit.,362.

98. Jack Kerouac, On the Road, op. cit.,217.

99. Ibid., 301-2.

100. V. Aksenov, A Ticket to the Stars, op. cit., 12.

101. Ibid., 18.

102. V. Aksyonov, The Burn, op. cit.,144-45.

103. Jack Kerouac, On the Road, op. cit., 141.

104. John Tytell, "The Broken Circuit", On the Road, op. cit., 334.

105. M. Bakhtin, Rabelais and his World, translated by H. Iswolsky, (London: M.I.T. Press, 1968), 11-12.

106. Ibid., 5-6.

3.2. The Quest.

1. See G. Nicosia, Memory Babe, op. cit., 343-4.

2. Ibid., 344.

3. Jack Kerouac, On the Road: Text and Criticism, edited by Scott Donaldson, (New York: Viking, 1979), 145. References to this novel (OTR) will in the following be given in the text.
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5. M.W. Askew, "Quests, Cars and Kerouac", in On The Road: Text and Criticism, op. cit., 452.
6. Ø. Øverland, "West and Back Again", Ibid., 452.
7. Ibid., 452.
8. Ibid., 460.
9. H.R. Huebel, Jack Kerouac, (Boise: Boise State University Western Writers Series, No.39, 1979), 11.
10. Ibid., 12.
11. G. Dardess, "The Delicate Dynamics of Friendship: A Reconsideration of Jack Kerouac's On the Road", in On the Road , op. cit., 412.
12. Ibid., 412-13.
13. Ibid., 413.
14. Ibid., 414.
15. M.M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel", in The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, M. Holquist, ed., (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 84.
16. Ibid., 250.
17. Ibid., 98.
18. Ibid., 244.
19. The cinematographic metaphor is, by the way, widely used in a similar way by W.S. Burroughs and L. Ferlinghetti (Her).
20. Bakhtin, op. cit., 154.
21. Ibid., 155.
22. Erik Fromm, "Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism", in N.W. Ross, ed., The World of Zen: An East-West Anthology, (New York: Vintage, 1960), 197.
23. John Tytell, "The Broken Circuit", op. cit., 338.
24. Ibid., 338.

25. V. Aksenov, "Ne otstavaia ot bystronogogo", Literaturnaia Gazeta, 71, (Moscow, 1961) 3; Recently, Aksyonov told me that he now again, 30 years later, feels a need to leave the comfortable life in a rowhouse in Washington, D.C., and go on the road to experience life.

26. D.B. Johnson, "Aksënov as Travel Writer: 'Round the Clock, Non-Stop", in Vasiliy Pavlovich Aksënov: A Writer in Quest of Himself, op. cit., 184.

27. Ibid., 189.

28. I. Lauridsen, "Beautiful Ladies in the Works of Vasiliy Aksënov", Ibid., 107.

29. V. Aksenov, "Kruglye sutki, non-stop", Novyi mir, 8, (Moscow: 1976), 75.

30. D.B. Johnson, "Aksenov as Travel Writer", op. cit., 189.

31. "Kruglye sutki...", op. cit., 92-3.

32. Ibid., 117. According to a letter from Aksyonov to Timothy Pogachar, the 'kid' referred to is Vladimir Vysotskii -- see Pogachar, "Vasily Aksyonov and the American Counterculture...", op. cit.

33. V. Filipp, "Tema begstva u Vasiliia Aksenova", Novyi zhurnal, 151, (New York, 1983), 69.

34. V. Aksenov, "Halfway to the Moon", in V. Aksenov, The Steelbird and Other Stories, edited and with an introduction by J.J. Johnson Jr., (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 67.

35. Ibid., 67-8.

36. Ibid., 76.

37. Parts of the following analyses of Aksyonov's works are taken from my book, The Function of the Grotesque in Vasilij Aksenov, (Aarhus: Arkona, 1982).

38. See my analysis, ibid., 114-120.

39. V. Aksenov, "Poiski zhanra", Novyi mir, 1, (Moscow, 1978), 141.

40. Ibid., 108.

41. Ibid., 121.

42. Ibid., 119.

43. Ibid., 165.

44. Ibid., 184-5.

45. Ibid., 109.

46. Ibid., 103.

47. Ibid., 119.
48. Ibid., 181.

49. B. Briker, "In Search of a Genre: The Meaning of the Title and the Idea of a Genre", in Vasiliy Pavlovich Aksenov: A Writer in Quest of Himself, op. cit., 153-4.

50. Ibid., 154.

51. V. Aksenov, "Sviiazhsk", in Prava na ostrov: rasskazy, (Ann Arbor: Hermitage, 1983), 146.

52. Ibid., 165.

53. Ibid., 165-5.

54. Ibid., 169.

55. Ibid., B. Briker, op. cit., 155.

56. Mikael Klefter, "Rejsemotivet hos Andrej Bitov", Slavica Othiniensia, 4, (Odense, 1981), 29.

57. Ibid., 29.

58. E. Kulavig, "På sporet af en ny sovjetisk socialkarakter -- en analyse af to noveller af Andrej Bitov," Slavica Othiniensia, 6, (Odense, 1983), 27.

59. Ibid., 32.

60. A. Bitov, "Takoe dolgoe detstvo," in Sem' puteshestvii, (Lenigrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1976), 120.

61. Ibid., 131-2.

62. Ibid., 134.

63. "Odna strana: puteshestvie molodogo cheloveka," in Sem' puteshestvii, op cit., 197.

64. Ibid., 199.

65. Olga Bakich Hassanoff, "A New Type of Character in the Soviet Literature of the 1960s: The Early Works of Andrei Bitov," Canadian Slavonic Papers, Vol. 23, no. 2, (Toronto, 1981), 139.

66. A. Bitov, "Puteshestvie k drugu detstva -- nasha biografiia," in Sem' puteshestvii, op. cit., 254.

67. Ibid., 253.

68. A. Bitov, "Uroki Armenii -- puteshestvie v nebol'shoiu stranu," in *Sem' puteshestvii*, op. cit., 342-3.

69. Ibid., 282.

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72. Ibid., 302.

3.3. Prose as Self-Revelation and Vision.

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2. Ibid., 141.

3. J.C. Holmes, "The Great Rememberer", in *Nothing More to Declare*, (New York: Dutton, 1967), 82.

4. Ibid., 70.

5. Tytell, *Naked Angels*, op. cit., 142.

6. Holmes, "The Great Rememberer", op. cit., 80.

7. Kerouac, "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose", op. cit., 533.

8. Jack Kerouac, *The Subterraneans*, preface by Henry Miller, (New York: Avon, 1959), 57-58.

9. Tallman, "Kerouac's Sound...", op. cit., 526.

10. Nicosia, *Memory Babe*, op. cit., 448.

11. Ibid., 450.

12. Jack Kerouac, *Book of Dreams*, (San Francisco: City Lights, 1961), 3.

13. Ibid., 78-79.

14. Tytell, *Naked Angels*, op. cit., 18.

15. Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, (New York: Viking, 1958), 203.

16. Gladilin, *The Making And Unmaking*, op. cit., 63.

17. Ibid., 28.

18. Ibid., 21.

19. Ibid., 24-26.

20. Per Dalgård, The Function of the Grotesque, op. cit., 41.

21. Vasily Aksenov, The Steelbird, in The Steelbird and other stories, op. cit., 50.

22. V. Aksyonov, It's Time, My Friend, op. cit., 32.

23. V. Aksyonov, The Bum, op. cit., 101-2.

24. E. Mozejko, "The Steelbird and Aksënov's Prose of the Seventies," in Vasiliy Pavlovich Aksënov: A Writer i Quest of Himself, op. cit., 220.

25. B. Briker, "In Search of a Genre: The Meaning of the Title...," op. cit., 158.

26. V. Aksenov, "Poiski Zhanra," op. cit., 185. I use Boris Briker's translation.

PART FOUR

The Poetry of the Beat Generation and the New Wave.

(by Inger Lauridsen)

4.0. INTRODUCTION.

Since the aim here is to demonstrate thematic similarities in the poetry of two whole literary movements, Part IV must necessarily take the form of a survey. Surveys of large bodies of poetry are, in my opinion, always hazardous, because of the nature of the poetic text.

Most poems are short; most of them attempt to say a lot in a small space. According to Ju. Lotman[1] each poem projects its own "world model" to which every textual element is relatable. In their interrelatedness, the elements of the poem become charged with additional information or "occasional meaning" which does not exist outside the context of the poem, or outside the poetic universe of the individual poet. A textual element taken in isolation -- be it a theme, a stanza, a phrase, an image -- does not retain its "occasional" meaning. Consequently, in surveying a large body of poetry from a specific point of view, one faces a high risk of manipulating the meaning of the individual texts.

In order to avoid forcing the material by wrongfully adapting it to my own needs, I have chosen, in the chapters dealing with the rebellion and the values of the two movements, to analyse some central poems in their entirety, to include some of the longer poems (in Russian, 'poemy'), and to deal with each poet separately, although such an approach entails a certain repetitiveness and perhaps a lesser degree of clarity than could otherwise have been achieved. At the same time, while trying to afford some insight into the poetic universe of each poet, I have, of course, concentrated on the features common to the Beat and New Wave poets, rather than aiming for exhaustive interpretations of the texts.

Because the main objective of this dissertation is to redefine the New Wave, I have included in my analyses all the three poets who formed the core of that movement in poetry: Akhmadulina, Evtushenko, and Voznesensky, while leaving out such related poets as E.Vinokurov, R. Rozhdestvenskii, Iu. Morits, N. Matveeva, B. Okudzhava and V. Vysotskii. Among the Beats only Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg are represented. I have chosen these two because between them, different as they are, they are representative of the Beat Generation as a whole, and because they are the ones who have had personal contacts with the New Wave; but above all, I have chosen them simply because they are the ones most readily comparable to the Russians.

This brings us back to the precautions which one must take in comparing these two movements and which we spoke of already in Part II. The protest and the spectrum of

It has turned out to be impossible to determine who holds the copyright of the two photographs on this page. The photographs were:

1. "Voznesensky with Khrushchev behind him", from A. Voznesensky, Nostalgia for the Present. New York: Doubleday, 1978 (following page 93)

2. "Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky and friends of Rocky Flats Truth Farce, meditating on R.R. Tracks outside Rockwell Corporation Nuclear Facility's Plutonium bomb trigger factory, Colerado", photo by Steve Groer, Rocky Mountain News, from A. Ginsberg, Collected Poems: 1947-1980. New York: Harper & Row, 1984, p. 796.

ideas and subject matter in the New Wave poetry indeed seem pale in comparison with what we find in Beat poetry. But the effect of a colour of course depends on the background. Consider the two photographs on page 263. They show both Ginsberg and Voznesensky as poets very much in the public eye; but while Ginsberg is attracting attention to himself in the most extreme fashion, Voznesensky looks as if he would do anything to divert attention from himself. Ferlinghetti seems to reproach the Russians for not telling their government "go fuck yourself with your atom bomb" as Ginsberg did in "America." Yet, had Voznesensky said a thing like that, it would have been the equivalent of Ginsberg's throwing himself directly in front of the train without warning anybody in advance. If the Russians did not say as much as the Beats, it was, of course, because they could not, but also because they did not have to. What they did say produced as strong an effect, in the audience and in the authorities, as did the Beats. One must agree with Daniel Weissbort's conclusion, at least with regard to Voznesensky:

> Though far more radically experimental and inventive than Yevtushenko as a verse-craftsman, Voznesensky occupies a similar position vis-a-vis contemporary reality in the Soviet Union, and like Yevtushenko, though with a certain time lag and not in all quarters (he still seems to be the darling of the American Beats), he has been accused abroad of compromising, of misusing his ebullient talent .... nevertheless, like Yevtushenko, he has upheld standards which may seem minimal to us, but which, in the context of Stalinism, even post-Stalinism, amount to nothing less than the prerequisites for any creative development.2

Finally, it should be kept in mind that we are comparing the New Wave and the Beat Generation in their beginnings, when the Russians believed they had the freedom to be "simply writers," while the Americans considered political activity in the traditional sense to be futile.

4.1. CARNIVAL AND SUBCULTURE: THE NATURE OF THE REVOLT.

4.1.0.

In this chapter, selected texts will be analyzed from the point of view of the specific type of revolt found to be characteristic of both the Beat Generation and the New Wave. The aim, then, is first to show that the poets view liberation as a spiritual rather than a political task, that they work for and proclaim the liberation of the individual consciousness from what they see as the false authorities represented by society's value system. Secondly, it is to demonstrate that theirs is a carnivalistic revolt, asserting the power of the spirit to overcome false authorities by laughing at them, while celebrating the rebirth of true values. Thirdly, it is to show that the poets celebrate the emergence of a community or subculture of those who have the new consciousness.

Within the Beat Generation, the work of Gregory Corso represents the extreme version of this kind of non-political revolt. What matters to Corso is the "Power"[1] to transcend life; he claims to be looking at the world from the point of view of a "love" beyond right and wrong : "Don't you know that I love everything; that I'd be equally wrong (be there such a thing) to deny as to accept, and therefore am without one-sidedness."[2] In Corso's "Bomb,"[3] nuclear destruction both is and symbolizes such a "Power," which, by destroying all meaning, makes possible a restructuring of the world into a kind of Heavenly Kingdom. Corso calls "Bomb" a "birth poem," and of his intentions he says that he wanted "to outstep the bomb or anything that is capable of destruction."[4] At the other end of the spectrum we find Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who has always kept "an eye on the world" and to whom spiritual and political liberation are inseparable. I have chosen, in this chapter, to concentrate on Ginsberg and on "Howl" as the most central single poem of the Beat Generation.

The New Wave poetry will be represented here by its two central figures, Andrei Voznesensky and Evgenii Evtushenko. In Voznesensky's case, I will again concentrate on a single work, the 'poema' "Oza," in which the poet has attempted to define his outlook on life. In Evtushenko's case, I have chosen instead to examine a group of poems, namely his poetic self-portraits. Finally, I will take a separate look at those poems of Voznesensky and Evtushenko which are based on the poets' American impressions.

4.1.1.1 "Howl" -- Ginsberg's Brave New Medium -- "Howl" was like no other poem of its time. The title, which was provided by Kerouac, may be also the name of the genre; it says what the poem is, rather than what it is about, and it indicates that "Howl" should be heard, rather than read. In "Howl," repetition, assonance, rhythm etc. do not combine in a firm cosmos of simultaneous meaning as in most modern poetry, here these devices work in the hypnotic way usually associated with music or oral literature, the words, as G. Bowering puts it, "propelling one another:"[5]

> who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride from Battery to holy
> Bronx on benzedrine until the noise of wheels and children brought
> them down shuddering mouth-wracked andbattered bleak of brain
> all drained of brilliance in the drear light of Zoo[6]

The dominant structuring principle within each section of the poem can only be described as associative. The fact that many structuralist categories are irrelevant to "Howl" lead many early reviewers to accuse Ginsberg of 'formlessness'. Ginsberg fought this type of criticism energetically[7], even tried to prevent it, addressing an explanatory letter to Richard Eberhart in 1956, when the latter had been commisioned by the New York Times to write a piece about the San Francisco poetry scene.

"The poem is really built like a brick shithouse," Ginsberg wrote to Eberhart[8], and to prove his point he included a "general ground plan"[9] of the structure, pointing out the clearly definable 'form' of each section : section I is a "catalog" with a fixed base "who," section II again has a fixed base "Moloch" which is then repeated and varied. The long line used in sections I and II is "the result of long thought and experiment as to what constitutes *one speech-breath-thought*.."[10] Section III is a "litany" in which the fixed base "I'm with you in Rockland" alternates with replies that grow gradually longer. This is, according to Ginsberg, "all an accident, organic, but quite symmetrical, surprisingly."[11]

While "Howl" is obviously biblical and Whitmanesque in tone (the epigraph to the "Howl" volume is from Whitman :"Unscrew the locks from the doors !"), it shows above all the influence of Kerouac's "spontaneous" prose[12], and Ginsberg generously acknowledged this in a letter to Kerouac written in 1955 :

> The pages I sent you of "Howl" (right title) are the first pages put down, as is.
> I recopied them and sent you the 100% original draft. There is no preexistent

> version. I typed it up as I went along, that's why it's so messy. ... I realize how right you are, that was the first time I sat down to *blow*, it came out in *your method*, sounding like you, an imitation practically (italics A.G.)[13]

The claim that Ginsberg makes in the Eberhart letter and elsewhere is that, in "Howl", he has gone one step further than those poets, like W.C.Williams, who introduced the rhythm of speech into poetry, that he has , in fact, found a new medium that directly records the uncensored "Natural flow of the mind."[14] It follows that the form or the 'shapeliness' of the poem will depend on the shapeliness of the mind flow.

In much of Ginsberg's earliest poetry there seems to be a fatal disproportion between the traditional forms he was working with and the message he wanted to convey, form and content making each other absurd, as for instance in the first of "Two Sonnets. After Reading Kerouac's Manuscript The Town and The City :"

> I dwelled in Hell on earth to write this rhyme
> I live in stillness now, in living flame,
> I witness Heaven in unholy time
> I room in the renownéd city, am
> Unknown ...[15]

It is difficult to accept "Howl" as pure transcription of spontaneous thoughts, as a poem which is, so to speak, unaware of itself as form, but comparing Sonnet I with "Howl", one tends to agree with Ginsberg, when he says that " 'Howl' is the first discovery as far as *communication* of feeling and truth, that I made." (italics A.G.)[16] In "Howl", the medium is to a certain extent also the message proclaiming the possibility of "naked", deconditioned communication. This is made explicit towards the end of section I:

> and who therefore ran through the icy streets obsessed with sudden flash
>   of the alchemy of the use of the ellipse the catalog the meter & the
>   vibrating plane,
> who dreamt and made incarnate gaps in Time & Space through images
>   juxtaposed, and trapped the Archangel of the soul between 2 visual
>   images and joined the elemental verbs and set the noun and dash of
>   consciousness together jumpin with sensation of Pater Omnipotens
>   Aeterna Deus
> to recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose and stand before
>   you speechless and intelligent and shaking with shame, rejected yet
>   confessing out the soul to conform to the rhythm of thought in his
>   naked and endless head,

An example of the "alchemy of the use of the ellipse" is the expression "hydrogen jukebox", a multilevelled image which, according to Ginsberg, is created by an unconscious process of fusion based on hearing the rock'n roll hit "Eve of Destruction" on jukeboxes, and which he calls "the key phrase of method in 'Howl'."[17] Another good example of "method" is the line "who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing / obscene odes on the windows of the skull". In "Howl", "deep syntax" takes priority over surface syntax, allowing words to retain the value they have in the mind flow, making it possible to join an adjective (crazy) and a verbal noun (publishing) paratactically. (At the same time the parts of speech can become semantically charged : section I ,which describes the passion of Ginsberg's heroes, is one long sentence with an abundance of verbs, whereas section II, the renunciation of Moloch, consists mainly of nouns, naming Moloch.) "Publishing obscene odes on the windows of the skull" is another example of the linguistic alchemy of the mind. It refers, on one level, to the fact that Ginsberg was expelled from Columbia College for writing "Fuck the Jews" with his finger in the dust on his windowpane in an attempt to provoke the cleaner into action."Skull" , then, confers the meaning 'death' on "the academies", but it also refers to Ginsberg's own skull through which there was a view to an inner world considered obscene by "the academies". Finally, Ginsberg has in fact published several odes.

"Howl" is an act of liberation on the linguistic level, it assumes that once the language is stripped naked, that is, freed from the self-censorship of the poet and the rules of ordinary discourse, it can be made to tell the truth, and the truth, in "Howl", is authentic feeling, experience. Again a comparison with the above quoted "Sonnet" brings out the effectiveness of "Howl". The sonnet is about the experience of hell and heaven : "I dwelled in Hell ...I witness Heaven", but "Howl" *is* such an experience, as W.C.Williams pointed out in his introduction to the poem : "Hold back the edges of your gowns, Ladies, we are going through hell."[18]

Ginsberg's personal life had been catastrophic until around the time when "Howl" was written : his mother was insane, he was a homosexual, his love for Neal Cassady, "secret hero of these poems", was not reciprocated, he had been thrown out of university and gone through jail and mental hospital. He desperately needed to express himself in order to accept and be accepted as the person he really was, and he was searching for a spiritual point of view from which to face existence in the rather terrifying form in which it had presented itself to him. In "Howl", the confessional and the prophetic/visionary modes, which had become dominant in his poetry, were fused; here intimate details from the lives of Ginsberg and his friends coexist with illuminating visions as naturally as they do in the thinking mind. The transitions between the levels of the confessional and the visionary, the private and the universal, are sometimes funny : "the eternal war is here O victory/ forget your underwear we're free", but never ridiculous, and this, I believe, is one of the great achievements of the poem.

The liberation of language corresponds with the liberation of experience. In "Sonnet I", the word "I" is repeated over and over, but "Howl" *is* a first person vision of the world : "I saw..". It pronounces holy every living sensation as an act of rebellion against the cold stone of Moloch/Rockland, validating the experiences of drug-addiction, homosexuality, paranoia and despair along with those of joy, love and compassion. When one opposes oneself to Moloch, it becomes possible to experience life to the full, from hell to heaven : "who sat in boxes breathing in the darkness under the bridge/and rose up to build harpsichords in their lofts". Vision, the "sensation of Pater Omnipotens Aeterna Deus" is a short-circuiting of experience that corresponds, on the existential level, with the "sudden flash of the alchemy of the use of the ellipse" on the linguistic level.

4.1.1.2 "Howl" as Protest Poem -- In "Howl", Ginsberg claims the world for the "I" who experiences it : "Who digs/ Los Angeles IS Los Angeles." The poem asserts that it is possible to undress before life, to have true experience and to truly communicate with others, as in poetry and love. It is a howl of joy as well as of pain; as a whole , it is probably for more things than it is against, but it was as a protest poem that it first impressed and shocked. The Norton Anthology of American Literature, for instance, includes only section I of "Howl" which, together with section II, contains Ginsberg's indictment of what he calls a "merciless society."[19]

Ginsberg himself has provided a thematic as well as a structural "ground plan" of "Howl" : "Part I, a lament for the Lamb in America with instances of remarkable, lamblike youths; Part II names the monster of mental consciousness that preys on the Lamb; Part III a litany of affirmation of the Lamb in its glory."[20] "Footnote to Howl", says Ginsberg, is "too lovely & serious a joke to be explained."[21]

The protagonists of section I are introduced as "the best minds of my generation", so as to leave no doubt about Ginsberg's own stand or the scope of his intentions in the poem. Many of the verbal predicates, despite overtones of irony, suggest that the protagonists are to be seen as religious martyrs : "ate fire," "purgatoried," "chained themselves," "disgorged in total recall for 7 days and 7 nights," "cast on the pavement," "suffering," "wandering," "seeking," "followed the brilliant Spaniard," "burned cigarette holes in their arms," " weeping and undressing," "howled on their knees," "were dragged off," "walked all night with their shoes full of blood," "and their heads shall be crowned with laurel in oblivion," "plunged themselves," "were burnt alive," "fell on their knees in hopeless cathedrals praying," and finally, "rose reincarnate." Because of the catalog form, these predicates are perceived on the same level as , for instance, " got busted in their pubic beards for returning through Laredo with a belt of Marijuana for NY," "burning their money in waste baskets," "talked continuously for seventy hours," "bit detectives in the neck," "let themselves be fucked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists," "scribbled all night," "sang out of their windows in despair," "drove crosscountry seventytwo hours" etc. All of these now signify as religious acts, steps taken in the search for "the ancient heavenly connection/ to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night." At the same time, as Ginsberg emphasizes inside the poem, "this actually happened;" most, possibly all of the actions described are taken from the lives of Ginsberg himself, his mother, and friends such as Carl Solomon, Kerouac, Burroughs, Corso, Neal Cassady and Herbert Huncke.

The martyrs are up against an enemy who cannot tolerate the idea of a "heavenly connection," a society that wants to possess their minds and bodies. Throughout section I, they gradually discover the extent of the enemy's power : he controls food, clothes, work, money, drugs, sex, learning, communication, art. Several of the institutions of control are named : the universities run by "scholars of war," the police, the "unemployment offices," the "leaden verse" of establishment poetry, "the iron regiments of fashion & the nitroglycerine shrieks of advertising," jail, media : the "radio of hypnotism." The city itself is an image of the enemy with its "blind streets," its "iron dreams" and "apartment cliff-banks." Fate is encountered as the compulsion to conform, to make money, to reproduce and to think unoriginal thoughts :

> Who lost their loveboys to the three old shrews of fate the one eyed shrew
> of the heterosexual dollar the one eyed shrew that winks out of the
> womb and the one eyed shrew that does nothing but sit on her ass
> and snip the intellectual golden threads of the craftman's loom,

The protagonists make several attempts to escape from the control system, they "vanish," "disappear," "retire," and, especially, "jump off," but they keep returning because the enemy controls the world, controls "Time." The protagonists' most important (and final) gesture of revolt comes when they throw their watches from the roof "to cast their ballot for eternity outside of Time," for which they are bombarded with alarm clocks for the next decade. The time concept which the protagonists rebel against is the one based on the idea of career, success, the one found in such expressions as "time management" or in an ad for elegant watches :"Time is what you've made it." This kind of time creates a "motionless world", because it is cut off from "eternity."

The protagonists are finally defeated or "beat in Time" when they allow the enemy to control their minds and start to think themselves mad. By now it seems they really are mad: "presented themselves on the granite steps of/ the madhouse with shaven heads and harlequin speech of/ suicide, demanding instantaneous lobotomy." But then when the last illusion, "the last hopeful little bit of hallucination" is shed, comes the resurrection of the martyrs as one "madman bum and angel beat in Time," one "Lamb." The lamb carries a message for Eternity : "what might be left to say in time come after death," a message of redemption in the form of jazz and in the form of "the absolute heart of the poem of life butchered out of their/own bodies," which, like the flesh and blood of Jesus in Holy Communion, is "good to eat a thousand years." Where earlier in the poem the protagonists gave up as hopeless the task of merely conversing "about America & Eternity," the prophesy here is that their suffering will lead to the redemption of a kind of original America, "America's naked mind."

Thus , while section I does contain sharp social criticism, the spectre of suffering has a purpose beyond that of pointing out social evils; it shows that beatitude grows out of beatness. "Howl is an affirmation of individual experiences of God, sex, drugs, absurdity etc.," Ginsberg wrote to Eberhart, who saw it as a destructive work. "To call it a work of nihilistic rebellion would be to mistake it completely. It offers no "constructive" program in sociological terms - no poem could." It is an affirmation of a different dimension - "basically the experience -- of the enlightenment of mystical experience -- without which no society can long exist."[22]

The two antagonistic forces struggling in section I are dealt with separately in sections II and III, each section reiterating the sequence of rebellion - defeat - resurrection. Section II takes up from the first line of the poem "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness," asking "What sphinx of cement and aluminium bashed open their skulls ." The poet again speaks in the first person, as he confronts the enemy and names him Moloch. The original Moloch was a Canaanite god represented as a huge stone statue surrounded by fire. Religious parents worshipped Moloch by placing their children in the arms of the statue where they were burnt alive. Depending on the point of view, this action can, as G. Bowering points out, mean two things: "A ravenous murder of children by their self-interested parents, or a chance for the children to purify themselves thru flames and torture and death."[23] The modern Moloch is seen from the point of view of the sacrificed children, as a kind of evil father. He is everything that is inhuman : inorganic, mechanical, sexless, soulless, and yet he pretends to be human, like a robot : "Moloch whose minds is pure machinery ! Moloch whose blood is/ running money ! . He is seen as a vast industrial city rather than as a stone idol, but again this is only the outer representation of the god. The real Moloch is the "monster of mental consciousness", the rational faculties of the mind isolated, mechanized, cut off from soul and body : "Moloch whose name is the Mind !" Moloch's children are defeated, all their "dreams ! adorations ! illuminations !" have gone "down the flood," but it is predicted that they will be resurrected as "Real holy laughter in the river" and this prophesy carries weight, because one does hear real, holy laughter in "Howl."

Section III casts Carl Solomon in Rockland (the mental hospital where he and Ginsberg first met) as an American Jesus, who declares war on "mental Moloch" on behalf of the soul : "Our own/ souls' airplanes roaring over the roof they've come to drop/ angelic bombs" and the body : "forget your underwear we're free." Rockland (Rock Land) will be transformed back into America by a "starry-spangled shock of mercy."

4.1.1.3. "Howl" and the Spirit of Carnivalistic Revolt -- The carnivalistic revolt, according to Bakhtin, is a suspension of the official values and hierarchy, giving way to "new, purely human relations"[24] and, consequently, a new form of speech. In "Howl," Ginsberg attempts to show the "new, purely human relations" that emerge in spite of Moloch and to create a new, more direct form of communication. What we find in "Howl" is not bare negation, not negation of separate, individual phenomena, but rather, as in the carnival, " a negation of the entire order of life (including the prevailing truth), a negation closely linked to the affirmation of that which is being born anew."[25]

"Howl" shares many of the characteristics of "grotesque realism" which is Bakhtin's term for the ideal literary manifestation of the carnivalistic. The principle of "degradation" or "down-grading", closely linked with the use of body imagery, is all-important in the poem. Down-grading is the lowering of the high, the spiritual, the ideal to the material level, the level of the earth and the body, where it is degraded and materialised; destroyed and reborn. In grotesque realism, the bodily is seen as something universal, representing the individual and all people; the body imagery, concentrating on the parts of the body which connect the inner and outer worlds (the mouth, the nose, the sexual organs, the anus) postulates the unity of the cosmic, the social and the bodily. In "Footnote to Howl", which, like the carnival, proclaims a new, transformed world, we find such paradigms of carnivalistic down-grading as "The soul is holy ! The skin is holy ! The nose/ is holy ! The tongue and cock and hand and asshole holy !."

The theme of madness and the image of the monster (Moloch) are likewise carnivalistic elements. In the carnival and in grotesque realism, monsters are ridiculous rather than frightening, and madness represents an alternative world view which liberates by relativising authorities. In the romantic version of the carnivalistic, "madness acquires a sombre, tragic aspect of individual isolation," the carnivalistic is transposed into a subjective sphere, and the world is perceived by the subject as alien, terrifying. "If a reconciliation with the world occurs, it takes place in a subjective, lyric, or even mystic sphere,"[26] says Bakhtin, and the images of bodily life have lost their regenerating, unifying power. The principle of laughter is still present, but in depleted form : the affirmative aspect of laughter is almost lost. The subject, laughing at the world, no longer includes himself in the world.

It would seem that the carnivalistic spirit of "Howl" is a hybrid form not envisaged by Bakhtin. It is romantic in its rendering of madness as suffering, in its emphasis on terror : "Moloch who frightened me/ out of my natural ecstasy !" And yet Moloch is not, like most romantic monsters, an emanation of the id, it is an effigy of a cold, rationalistic, merciless consciousness which is finally defeated by "Real holy laughter." The laughter in "Howl" represents the triumph of the human soul over "mental Moloch," and as such it is inclusive and regenerating as in the original folk culture of the carnival. This is even more pronounced in"America," [27] 1956, where the poet, although reluctantly ("Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb./ I don't feel good don't bother me"), engages in a conversation with America and hears :

> Them Russians them Russians and them Chinamen. And them Russians.
> The Russia wants to eat us alive. The Russia is power mad. She wants to take
> our cars from out our garages.
> Her wants to grab Chicago. Her needs a red Reader's Digest. Her wants our
> auto plants in Siberia. Him big bureaucracy running our fillingstations.
> That no good. Ugh. Him make Indians learn read. Him need big black
> niggers. Hah. Her make us all work sixteen hours a day. Help.
> America this is quite serious.

The poet finally makes a kind of pledge to save America from her Time Magazine/television identity, but he proposes no social reforms, no political revolution (although he confesses that "I used to be a communist when I was a kid I'm not sorry"), what he offers as an alternative is his own clownish self, his human individuality :

I'd better get right down to the job.
It's true I don't want to join the army or turn lathes in precision parts
factories, I'm nearsighted and psychopathic anyway.
America I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.

The reconciliation with the world which occurs or rather is prophesized in "Howl" does take place in a "mystic sphere" , but not only there, and not in the abstract or in isolation. To Ginsberg, "the enlightenment of mystical experience" is, as we have seen, something universal, representing all people, just as the life of the body (cf. the celebration of sexual ecstasy in "Howl"), something "without which no society can long exist."[28]

4.1.2.1. Voznesensky's Parabola -- If American establishment poetry before Ginsberg and the Beats had become increasingly esoteric and idiosyncratic in its fear of uttering a platitude, the situation in official, Soviet poetry of the 30s, 40s, and early 50s was, of course, quite the opposite, as one extreme example will show :

He gave us forever and ever
Youth, glory and power.
He has lit the clear dawn of spring
Over our homes.
Let us sing, comrades, a song
About the dearest person,
About our sun, about the truth of nations,
About Stalin let's sing a song[29]

While many of the great 20th century Russian poets were alive, this kind of material was being published, and when the New Wave poets emerged, they were not only trying, like the Beats, to write poetry that would be of "essential use", they also had to prove to the public that poetry could still exist in the contemporary world as a thing apart from political propaganda. While Ginsberg was charged with 'formlessness', conservative critics invariably came down on Voznesensky's 'formalism' (the premise in both cases being that poetic form is something the poet should not tamper with).

Voznesensky's formalism consisted in an effort to activize other levels than the lexical in the creation of poetic meaning, and in this effort he drew on Maiakovsky as well as the 'forbidden' poets of the 20th century, notably Pasternak, Mandelshtam, and

Khlebnikov. He insisted that, in poetry, meaning is inseparable from sound, rhythm etc., sometimes suggesting that the meaning of individual words is inherent in their sound, as in the famous "Goya" [30] poem,1957, where the essence of Goya's paintings is crystallized in a cluster of words all containing the syllable -go. Voznesensky has not gone as far along this path as Khlebnikov in his 'transrational language', or Michael McClure in his 'beast language', although he has ocassionally used self-invented words, for instance in the poem "Skrymtymnym"(Skrymtymnym), 1971.

Calling his first collection of poetry The Parabola (Parabola), 1960, Voznesensky served notice that he was taking on the task of rehabilitating poetry. First of all, as Voznesensky shows through the example of Gauguin in "Parabolic Ballad" (Parabolicheskaia ballada), the straight line might be preferable in non-poetic discourse, but the route of the artistic message is the parabola; poetry, according to Voznesensky, must be difficult. Secondly, as N. Å. Nilsson points out[31], the Russian word 'parabola' also means 'parable', suggesting that poetry works through imagery and allegory.

Metaphor is all-important in Voznesensky's poetry. Just as he uses sound similarities to point out unexpected relationships between words, his metaphors serve to project an image of the world in which everything is interrelated and everything is being transformed. "The line of the united state is the straight line," said Zamyatin in We[32], but the line of life, according to Voznesensky, is the parabola, the outline of a pregnant woman's belly and of the moon in "You sit, pregnant and pale." If poetry must be complicated, it is because life in the contemporary world is complicated. Clarity, in a world of meaningless objects as projected in "Foggy Street" (Tumannaia ulitsa) or "Fleamarket" (Marshe o pius), can only be experienced in a spiritual dimension, in glimpses of the spiritual principle that unites all things, in the "sensation of Pater Omnipotens Aeterna Deus," the feeling of oneness with the world's subject rather than with its objects. Voznesenskii's metaphors, then, often have the character of epiphanies. Commenting on one of his 'visual' poems, Voznesensky has said : "God is invisible, but we may guess at the whole of his form from his 'bathing trunks' - a sea gull hovering in the sky."[33]

4.1.2.2. "Oza" -- In "Master Craftsmen" (Mastera), 1959[34], Voznesensky pits "artists of all times" against "barbarians of every age," identifying the artists as eternal "rebels" and the barbarians as "tyrants and czars" worried about their "moneybags and empire." But rebellion, in Voznesensky's poetry, rarely takes the form of political protest, although some poems , like for instance "The Cashier" (Kassirsha)[35], 1959, lend themselves easily to allegorical interpretation along political lines. This poem depicts a familiar scene from a Soviet grocery store : a sullen , female cashier and a group of angry customers who claim to have been short-changed. But the scene takes on a grotesque dimension when the cashier rises "like dough from her glass cage," and the customers, who are described as deaf-mutes, start to roar like Beethoven and to shed tears that smell like ozone. Finally, it turns out that the object of the argument, the money, is counterfeit : Lenin's profile is missing from the 50 ruble bill. The poem can be read as an indictment of Soviet Society for having substituted the counterfeit values of materialism for true, revolutionary values, for having created "mute" citizens reduced to arguing over "pennies like medals" (mediashek medali). But it is the ozone-smelling tears, as a sign that there is life beyond the grocery store, that really interest the poet. Here, and in most of his work, what he rebels against is the reduction of life to one-dimensionality. The 'poema' "Oza", 1964[36], his most ambitious work of the early period, is an attempt to recreate the complexity and ambiguity of life.

"Oza" consists of 14 numbered and 3 unnumbered sections and is ostensibly a diary found in a hotel room in Dubna, the cite of a large Soviet centre for atomic research. However, very little is done to support this fiction. Firstly, contrary to what one would expect in a diary, it is impossible to establish the chronological sequence of events, and secondly the identities of the diarist and the finder/editor are not clearly distinguishable. Only the unnumbered sections between IX and X and section VIII are unequivocally attributable to the finder. After section IX, in the unnumbered "From the Author and a Few Other Things" (Ot avtora i koe-chto drugoe), the finder informs us that at this point the diary is interrupted by some calculations and notes for lectures, and we may assume that the diarist is a scientist visiting Dubna for professional reasons. Then the finder reports comments written in the diary by previous finders, accusing the diarist of being an "abstractionist" (abstraktist), of writing with a "subtext" (podtekst), that is , a subversive, hidden meaning etc., comments that have also been made by critics about Voznesensky's own work. Moreover, one of the previous finders has removed parts of the diary, probably, the editor suggests, the sexually most explicit parts, which is rather convenient, since Voznesensky was repreatedly accused of being pornographic. Thus the diarist may be a scientist, but he may also be the poet himself; the latter possibility is supported by section XII in which Voznesensky identifies himself as the lover of the poem's heroine Zoia-Oza. Then, in section XIII, the finder assures us that he has changed nothing in the diary apart from substituting the name Zoia for the real name of the heroine. But this name and the name play Zoia - Oza is so central to the poem, that when the finder claims to have invented it, it is almost tantamount to saying he is the author.

The first, unnumbered section is both an elegy of lost love and a kind of prayer. Oza is addressed as a real woman and as a divinity : "Ave Oza," "I listen to Your breath" (slushaiu dykhanie Tvoe), the capitalized personal pronoun recalling Blok's "Beautiful Lady" and other Divine Feminines in the poetry of the symbolists. Section I explains the origin of the name Oza : a woman named Zoia (the Russian version of the Greek Zoe -- life) defies regulations and goes up to a cyclotron, still wearing her bracelets. She starts changing "vaguely" (smutno),until she is "there and not there" (s nami i net ee), until she no longer responds to the name Zoia. Section I, like II, VII and X , ends with a guess by the diarist or the finder: "Maybe they call her Oza ?" (Mozhet, ee nazyvaiut Oza ?) , 'Oza' being a redistribution of the sounds in 'Zoia'. Here and elsewhere in the poem it would seem that Zoia is a real woman, while Oza is something like the Eternal Feminine, Woman as the archetype of Life. In XII, the speaker takes leave of Zoia, a physicist with whom he has had an affair, and greets Oza : "Farewell Zoia! Greetings Oza!" (Proshchai Zoia! Zdravstvui Oza!). Yet the two are not always distinguishable : in section IX, the speaker apologizes for having put Oza behind the "bars of verses" (reshetku strok) and then immediately afterwards hears her "live little voice" (zhivoi golosok) on the telephone. In the course of the poema, Zoia - Oza takes on many meanings[37]: she is love, nature, the soul, humanity, poetry etc., and at the same time an image of a real woman emerges, one who is both vulnerable and strong, with the power to "give breath" (ty dykhanie mne darila) (XI). It is never clear whether Zoia-Oza is near or distant, or whether she is, has just been, or is about to be. In section VIII, all we see of her is her shoes left on the beach. The speaker wonders whether she has drowned in the sea or whether she has taken off like a newly hatched bird leaving her shoes which look like "eggshells" (skorlupki). In section IX the speaker worries whether, in writing about Oza and wanting to give her immortality, he has not, instead, turned her into a lifeless object, because: "What is our life ? / Mutual reansformation. / As for immortality -- it's interrupted movement" (Chto nasha zhizn' ? / Vzaimoprevrashchenie. / Bessmertie zhe -- prekrashchennoe dvizhenie). But in fact the poem does leave an impression of Zoia - Oza as something ever-changing, alive, and independent of time.

Both she and the diarist/finder are, as Voznesensky put it in "Who are we ?" (Kto my ?)[38], 1959, "like the Abominable/ Snowman, absolutely elusive" (vrode snezhnogo cheloveka,/ Absoliutno neulovim).

Voznesenskii's intention in "Oza", like Ginsberg's in "Howl", is to make the idea of spiritual liberation visible. Like the martyrs of "Howl" he rebels against linear time, against the objectification of the human being. If the human being is definable in terms of its physical properties alone, then time, for the human being, is nothing but a race towards death. This is the view held by the raven in section VI, a parody of Poe's "The Raven:" "how boring all these metamorphoses/ sooner or later you'll end up in a box" (kak skuchny metamorfozy/ v iashchik rano ili pozdno). But if Zoia - Oza, the divine in the human, exists, then the encounters with her are moments of eternity. In section VI, the speaker counters the raven:

How to tell that scoundrel
that we live not in order to kick the bucket
but to touch with our lips the wonder
of a kiss and a stream

(kak skazat' emu, podonku
chto zhivem ne chtob podokhnut',-
chtoby gubami tronut' chudo
potseluia i ruch'ia)

Time, then, becomes a subjective category, a function of experience. Living is changing, but immortality is "a still cut out of a filmstrip" (vyrezan iz lenty kinokadr); touching eternity does not mean being immortal, it means being part of the eternal filmstrip which is the spirit. It may not be visible, but it is knowable, it is immaterial and real like the sound of the airplane in the single image of section XIV :

A plane was flying.
And behind it
always at the same distance
flew the slow sound
rectangular, like a barge
in tow.

(Shel samolet.
I za nim
na neizmennom rasstoianii
letel otstavshii zvuk,
priamougol'nyi, kak pritsep
na buksire.)

But Zoia - Oza is constantly being threatened: in section III she is a bird unaware of the guns pointed at her, in section VIII her shoes are like doves in the path of a tank etc.

The anti - Oza forces are concentrated in the character " (Russian letter, the so-called 'hard sign' which today has no sound value of its own, but acts only as a separator of other sounds. " appears in sections II and X which are both dystopian fantasies and both, significantly, in prose, disguised as poetry only by means of various kinds of indentation.

In section II, " is an "experimenter," whose experiment seems to have transformed the world. Everything has changed places including historical events : "The industrial revolution was followed by the invasion of Batu Khan" (Za industrial'noi revoliutsii sledovalo nashestvie Batyia). The experimenter's great dream is to cut the earth into halves and fit one into the other -- "True, half of humanity would perish, but then the other half would know the joy of the experiment !" (Pravda, polovina chelovechestva pogibnet, no zato vtoraia vkusit radost' eksperimenta !).

Thus, the experimenter, another "monster of mental consciousness" to use Ginsberg's phrase, represents scientific materialism taken to the extreme. In his world, humanity and science have changed places, humanity exists for the sake of science rather than vice versa. In section IV, the rosy-cheeked Marxist historian, Zoia - Oza's father, shares the optimistic view of technology, but sees it as a means for humanity to fulfill all its dreams. He believes that humanity has "reverse age" (obratnyi vozrast), that it "goes from old age to youth" (idet ot starosti k molodosti), that is, towards greater innocence, and that technology, consequently, is in good hands. But he, too, is discredited, he is naive - "Children and dogs smile at him" (Emu ulybaiutsia deti i sobaki), and the passage dealing with his views is again in prose, as opposed to the rest of section IV. Neither the absurd dream of the experimenter nor the utopian vision of the historian takes into account the elusive Zoia - Oza, the true dream of humanity. Both represent the ideology of material progress which Voznesenskij rejects, in his own name in an uncharacteristically simple verse statement in section XII : "All progresses are/ reactionary/ if the human being is destroyed" (Vse progressy -/ reaktsionny,/ esli rushitsia chelovek).

The first published version of "Oza"[39] contained a poem about Stalin, inserted, like a different voice, into the argument of the historian in section IV, just as he is about to sing the praise of the 20th century. The poem is interesting mainly for its irreverent, carnivalistic treatment of the subject. Like many anecdotes and many later, satirical representations of Stalin, it concentrates on his moustache, which was always a very important part of his public image, once a symbol of Stalin's paternal love and powerfulness, later a memory of despotism and terror. In Voznesenskii's poem the personified moustache is, above all, absurd and ludicrous:

> And majestically above the land,
> with the beauty of a bird of prey,
> it hovered,
> tinged
> with red,
> the great state moustache !

But the image of the experimenter " in section II also gives rise to more narrowly political associations; one cannot read, for instance, the following speech without thinking of that other great experimenter, Stalin :

> E9 - D4, - the experimenter murmured. -Oh, the secret of creation ! By moving the addends around you won't change the sum.The important thing is to preserve the system. What's the use of poetry. There will be robots. As for the psyche - it's a combination of amino-acids..

> E9 - D4, - bormotal eksperimentshchik.-O, tainstvo tvorchestva ! Ot peremeny mest slagaemykh summa ne meniaetsia. Vazhno sokhranit' sistemu. K chemu poeziia ? Budut roboty. Psikhika - eto kombinatsiia aminokislot..

Stalin's experiment involved the creation of a "New Soviet Man", and this experimenter, too, is an 'engineer of human souls', who puts people through "prophylactic" treatment by cyclotron: "They were taken apart and reassembled. / They came out renewed." (Ikh pazbirali i sobirali./ Vykhodili obnovlennymi). One person comes out with an ear screwed into his forehead, but it is all for the best : he will be more efficient as a spy now that he is able to simultaneously listen and look through keyholes.

Ironically, the one thing in the otherwise upside-down world of section II that appears unchanged is the literary bureaucracy : "only the presidium of the section on stage maintained order" (tol'ko na stsene Prezidium sektsii sokhranial poriadok). A literary conference of sorts seems to be in progress; from the podium a speaker is calling for a move "Forwards, towards a new art" (Vpered k novomu iskusstvu), but as the speaker's head is turned back to front, it is unclear what he means by "forwards."

People choose instead to follow a sign which points "maybe to the toilet/ maybe to the new art" (ne to v tua-/ let, ne to k novomu iskusstvu), and we get an image of the "new art" as a mechanized mass culture with no direction of its own.

In section X, " reappears, now as a "toastmaster" (tamada). The scene is a birthday party in the Berlin hotel, observed in the mirror which covers the ceiling. The birthday girl, "you" (ty), is presumably Zoia - Oza, but she is unfamiliar, like "a gift in cellophane" (podarok v tsellofane). The guests, too, are like objects, their heads with neatly parted hair looking like piggy banks with slits. The speaker repeatedly points out that "No faces could be seen", but the Russian "Lits ne bylo vidno" is ambiguous, it also translates as "No persons could be seen." The speaker himself is present, but invisible. The guests seem to belong to the artistic intelligentsiia. There are several poets present, and one "fashionable" poet is asked to recite something "closer to life, something unearthly .. so long as it is modern" (Poblizhe k zhizni, ne ot mira sego.. chtoby modernovo). He agrees, and starts reciting in a strange "somehow antiworldish" (kak by antimiren) voice a parodic "Prayer" to the Virgin of Vladimir, asking her to plead for him with his beloved, who may be Oza (she is referred to both as "Her" and "her").

Reciting, the poet throws his head back and presumably looks into the mirror, causing the mirror world and the one below to touch; in any case, there is a shift to a different kind of indentation here , splitting section X into two halves which are typographical mirror images of each other.

The next poet, who is drunk, actually mentions Oza's name in his poem, although it is disguised in the words "Predoz'se" -- Land of Before Oza, and "Zaoz'e" -- Land of After Oza. His recitation is followed by embarrassed silence until the toastmaster rises to toast the birthday girl. He calls her "the newborn" and himself her "Godfather," but he has forgotten her name.

The speaker is by now aware that there are two worlds, one in the mirror and one below, but he is unable to place himself : "But what is this ? Where am I ? In what idiotic dimension? (No chto eto ? Gde ia ? V kakom idiotskom izmerenii ?). In his distraction, he mechanically swallows a red caviar sandwich. The "peripheral classic" who sits across the table notices the visible caviar being processed in the speaker's invisible stomach and reacts not with amazement but with envy : "Aha, and the rest of us have to eat anchovies !" (A nas kil'koi kormiat). The speaker has decided to smash the mirror as a means of making himself and his beloved real, and in order not to get caught before he can do so, he goes and lies down on a piece of red carpet against which the red caviar won't show.

In the dystopian world of section II, the speaker did not recognize anything, but in section X everything seems to remind him of something else; the text contains echoes from most of the previous sections. When the guests start dancing across his body he finally realizes that they are all metallic, that they are robots, and at the same moment he remembers the name of his beloved : "Zoia ! - I scream. Zoia ! BUT MAYBE THEY CALL HER OZA ?" (Zoia ! - oru ia. - Zoia ! A MOZHET EE NAZYVAIUT OZA ?).

As the toastmaster and the robot guests of section X are obviously the same as the experimenter and the mechanical people of section II, it may be assumed that the two sections are dealing with different aspects of the same world. The atmosphere of section X is formal and ceremonious, the birthday party has the flavour of an official pseudo-event like many in the lives of Soviet people and Soviet writers in particular. To the other guests, the official occasion is reality, only the speaker is constantly aware of the absurd twin world in the mirror.

The speaker represents, first of all, the human being, who has become invisible in the mechanical, official world. He is oppressed with a sense of isolation in a crowd and feels that he has no choice but to conform (merge with the red carpet) or be destroyed. But in view of the pronounced literary connotations of this birthday party, we may also interpret the role of the speaker as that of the true poet, the only one who recognizes the true muse, that is , Zoia -Oza. The toastmaster, on the other hand, refers to the birthday girl as "the newborn" and is therefore a spokesman of the "new art." But "new art" is to true art what robots are to people; the true muse, Zoia - Oza, is independent of time, old and new at the same time. The speaker here faces a situation not unlike Voznesensky's own. The "new art" of the Soviet period is Socialist Realism, which has remained more of a "mechanical nightingale"(XII), more the invention of some experimenter, that a real, literary movement; and the poet who wants to rid the Russian muse of this false identity must hide, that is , he must work from within Soviet literature.

4.1.2.3. Voznesensky and the Spirit of Carnivalistic Revolt -- What Voznesensky takes on in "Oza" is nothing less than the whole prevailing concept of reality. By ridiculing authorities, showing scientists, ideologues and officials grotesquely deformed, as robots, or upside down, he wants, in Bakhtin's words, to disclose "the gay relativity of authorities" and "the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order."[40] The official "truth of this world"[41] is, according to Voznesensky, based on pure rationality and therefore dehumanizing, mechanical. The text of "Oza" is often puzzle-like, often invites speculation, but only to make a mockery of conventional logic. Like Ginsberg in "Howl," Voznesenskii rebels against "robotization" (robotizatsia) on behalf of the human, the soul and the body. He cannot, as Ginsberg does, include sex among the acts of rebellion and enlightenment, he can only hint that the "juiciest" parts of the poem have been removed and thereby point out that sex belongs in the picture. In the birthday scene of section X, it is another bodily function, the digestion of a sandwich, that sets the speaker apart from the robot guests.

Within limits set by censorship on the one hand, and his own poetics on the other, Voznesensky enjoys introducing slang words and idioms into his poetry, often mixing them with abstract words for purposes of down-grading. Examples from "Oza" would be the line "slam yourself at her feet" (grokhnis' ei v nogi) in the "Prayer" to the Virgin of Vladimir (X), or the refrain of the Raven "What the hell ?!" (A na figa ?!) in section VI. "A na figa" is an unexpectedly slangy expression for the Raven to use, but at the same time it is anti-climactic because the rhyme scheme of each stanza leads the reader to expect, instead, "A na khuia ?!", meaning approximately "What the fuck ?!". There is , of course, no comparison with the mixture of religious rhetoric and sexual jargon that led to an obscenity trial in the case of "Howl," and it must furthermore be stressed that Voznesensky and Ginsberg have very different purposes in using slang. In "Howl", Ginsberg wanted to use the only language that seemed sincere and meaningful to him, namely the one spoken by himself and his friends among themselves; the language, then, is part of the characterization of the subcultural community eulogized in the poem. But if Ginsberg defines poetry as "what poets write,"[42] Voznesensky believes in Poetry with a capital P. To Voznesensky, poetry is a magic language, always unique and new, and at the same time immediately recognizable as poetic and measurable against standards set by Voznesensky's poetic canon. Slang exists in Voznesensky's poetry as one separate language competing with others, all of which are eventually subordinated to the language of poetry. In this sense, Voznesensky is more in line with Lawrence Ferlinghetti than with Ginsberg.

To a Soviet critic like Nazarenko[43], Voznesensky's rejection of the official world amounts to a negation of social existence as such in favour of barren self-absorption. But Voznesensky, like Ginsberg, celebrates a new community "based on purely human relations" and opposed to the world of robots, although he is not as specific in outlining a subcultural community as is Ginsberg, or even Evtushenko. In many poems the feminine pshyche, "Woman" serves as an image of the new consciousness, while in others Voznesensky's New Wave colleagues serve as examples[44]. In "Oza," Voznesensky identifies this special community with his audience, who have souls and therefore understand the language of poetry :"But why then do we fill up the Luzhniki Stadium/ drawn to poetry as if it were a cure for scurvy ?/ And joyfully and bashfully souls burst forth in us.." (A pochemu zh togda, zapolniv Luzhniki,/ my tianemsia k stikham, kak k travam ot tsingi ?/ I radostno i robko v nas dushi rastsvetaiut..)(IV).

Voznesensky attacks the time concept represented by the raven in section VI : "You're flying along in an automobile, but the automobile is without a wheel" (Ty letish' v avtomashine, no mashina - bez rul'ia..)(VI)[45], because it reduces life to one-dimensionality. Like Ginsberg, Voznesensky posits the transcendental experience, the moment in eternity as a way to break the compulsion of linear time. But to Voznesensky, the experience of eternity is the carnivalistic experience of being part of life's eternal cycle. "Oza" is ultimately about a love affair with life (Zoia) and it projects an image of life as something ever-changing, a continuous dying and becoming, in which everything is interrelated, and which is, therefore , opposed to anything finished, unambiguous. The irreducible ambiguity of life is a major theme in Voznesensky's early poetry, and it is perhaps nowhere more 'carnivalistically' expressed than in the 1969 poem "Antiworlds" (Antimiry). Antiworlds are the place where the Gogolian clerk Bukashkin becomes the devilishly attractive academician Antibukashkin. But they are also the principle that gives meaning to existence : "Without the stupid there could be no clever ones/ no oases without deserts" (Bez glupykh ne bylo by umnych/ oazisov bez Karakumov). The existence of the antiworlds makes everything relative, including authorities:

> I love my critics.
> On the neck of one of them,
> Fragrant and bald,
> There shines a perfect antihead !
>
> (Liubliu ia kritikov svoikh.
> Na shee odnogo iz nikh,
> Blagoukhanna i gola'
> Siiaet antigolova !)

Authorities, consequently, do not believe in antiworlds: "A lecturer I know told me yesterday:/ Antiworlds are a load of rubbish." (Znakomyi lektor mne vchera/ Skazal Antimiry - mura.)

There are two passages in the first person singular, one in the middle and one at the end of the poem. In the first passage, the speaker sleeps with his windows open, aware of the world and of his antiworld out there somewhere on the other side of the globe. The mood here is one of fullness and harmony. In the second passage, the speaker feels confined : "I sleep, tossing and turning/ In the City's apartment cells" (Ia spliu vorochaias' sprosonok/ V iacheikakh gorodskikh kvartir), but still "My cat, like a radio/ Catches the world with his green eye" ("Moi kot kak radiopriemnik/ Zelenym glazom lovit mir"). This time, it seems to be the world that is outside, and the inside, the apartment cell, then, is the antiworld of 'objective reality', which cannot contain the speaker's psyche even when he listens to lecturers and closes his windows.

4.1.3 Evtushenko's Paradoxes.

Evtushenko is a poet of many paradoxes. As E.Etkind writes in Russische Lyrik[46]: "Er ist fur die Revolution aber auch dagegen; fur die himmlische Liebe, zugleich aber auch fur die irdische; fur den Internationalismus, aber auch fur das Russentum" and this list can be expanded ad hoc.

Evtushenko started his career as a newspaper poet, and as he admits in his Autobiography : "I soon caught on : for my poems to be published there had to be a few lines about Stalin in them. This even seemed natural to me."[47] But when Stalin died, Evtushenko was among the first to voice the anger of the young generation in courageous anti-Stalinist poems. His change of heart, he claims in the Autobiography, occurred on the very day of Stalin's funeral. Watching people being crushed to death by the crowd and policemen standing idly by, because "we have no instructions,"[48] he suddenly realized the true significance of Stalin.

Evtushenko became the leader of the New Wave poets, both in the area of confessional, lyric poetry and later as a civic poet, but as far as poetics goes, he was the most traditional among his peers. He did not concern himself with the peculiarity of the poetic language to the extent that Voznesensky did, his first objective was to "give back to the words their original sound,"[49] to call things by their right name. He shares with Ginsberg what Ferlinghetti called "the Maiakovskian, heroic stance" (see interview), the sometimes rhetorical tone , and the use of the catalog form as a means of accumulating emotional intensity in vocal poetry.

The long epic "Zima Railway Station" (Stantsiia Zima)[50], 1955, is a typical thaw work, almost an index of things that now came up for criticism : blind belief in authorities, uninformed and dictatorial management, dullness in the arts, disregard for the emotional life etc. But, spurred on by his success among young audiences and by what he perceived as their demands, Evtushenko went further. In "Babii Iar", 1961[51], he took on the sensitive theme of Soviet anti-semitism:

A boot kicks me aside, helpless.
In vain I plead with these pogrom bullies.
While they jeer and shout,
" Beat the Yids. Save Russia !"
some grain- marketeer beats up my mother.

(Ia, sapogom otbroshennyi, bessilen.
Naprasno ia pogromshchikov moliu.
Pod gogot :
" Bei zhidov, spasai Rossiiu !"
Labaznik izbivaet mat' moiu.)

He dealt directly with the trauma of stalinism in such poems as "The Idol" (Idol), "Dead Hand of the Past" (Mertvaia Ruka Proshlogo)[52], "Cockroaches" (Tarakany) etc. In "The Heirs of Stalin" (Nasledniki Stalina)[53], 1962, he not only dared to speak the unmentionable name of the dead leader, but hinted that he might not be quite dead :

A thin wisp of smoke curled over the coffin.
And breath seeped through the chinks
as they bore him out the mausoleum doors.
Slowly the coffin floated,
grazing the fixed bayonets.
He also was mute -
he also ! -
mute and dread.
Grimly clenching
his enbalmed fists,
just pretending to be dead,
he watched from inside.[64].

(A grob chut' dymilsia.
Dykhanie skvoz' shcheli teklo,
Kogda vynosili ego iz dverei mavsoleia.
Grob medlenno plyl,
zadevaia krajami shtyki.
On tozhe bezmolvnym byl -
tozhe !
no grozno bezmolvnym.
Ugriumo szhimaia
nabal'zamirovannye kulaki,
v nem k shcheli prinik
chelovek pritvorivshiisia mertvym.)

To be sure, Evtushenko let it be understood that he was denouncing sStalinism and Russian chauvinism from the point of view of a communist and a true Russian patriot, and during the period when such poems as "Babii Iar" and "The Heirs of Stalin" were published, he also produced a large amount of rather orthodox poetry.

The intriguing thing about Evtushenko, the circumstance that justifies our discussion of his poetry in the context of carnivalistic revolt, is the fact that, instead of trying to hide his paradoxes, he has attempted to make a virtue and a principle of them. As Etkind points out, this attitude is responsible for Evtushenko's rather isolated position today, when it is increasingly construed as failure to take a stand on anything at all or worse as political opportunism, as well as for his popularity during the 60s.

Evtushenko insisted on the "complexity" (slozhnost') of life, as in the programmatic "On Simplicity" (O prostote) 1957: "I love simplicity, but if it's real,/ When, the complexity of essence revealing,/ It doesn't mere emptiness conceal" (Ia prostotu liubliu no tu,/ chto paskryvaet slozhnost' suti,/ a ne skryvaet pustotu)[54], or in "Two Cities" (Dva goroda) 1964 :

> I am like a train
> that's been shuttling for years
> Between the city of Yes
> And the city of No.
> My nerves strain
> Like the telegraph wires
> Between the city of No
> And the city of Yes ![55]
>
> (Ia, kak poezd,
> chto mechetsia stol'ko uzh let
> mezhdu gorodom Da
> i gorodom Net.
> Moi nervy natianuty,
> kak provoda,
> mezhdu gorodom Net
> i gorodom Da !)

This poem, which is dedicated to Aksyonov, is one of the most ambiguous in all of Evtushenko's production. The descriptions of the two cities, neither of which the speaker can endure for long, are suggestive enough to permit several interpretations. "Yes" and "No" may be the light and the dark side of the speaker's own nature, they may be the world of nature and the world of civilization, they may be the old world and the modern world, and they may be the same, Soviet reality seen from two opposite viewpoints : that of the insider and that of the outsider. In any case, the point of the poem is that the poet exists 'in transit', leaving complexity intact.

Often, Evtushenko's attempts to capture the essential complexity of life take the form of poems about himself, such as for instance "Prologue" (Prolog), 1957:

I'm many-sided,
I'm overworked,
and idle too.
I have a goal
and yet I'm aimless,
I don't, all of me, fit in;
I'm awkward,
shy and rude,
nasty and goodnatured.[56]

(Ia raznyi
Ia natruzhennyi
i prazdnyi,
Ia tsele
i netselesoobraznyi,
Ia ves' nesovmestimyi,
neudobnyi,
zastenchivyi i naglyi,
zloi i dobryi.)

Evtushenko creates a Maiakovskian, hyperbolic image of himself as the eternal truth-seeking youth -- sensitive, complicated, paradoxical, greedy for life and irreconcilable towards pettiness and evil, as in the 1955 poem "Irreconcilable" (Neprimirimost')[57]:

And picking a road unsuited
for the making of a career,
a road drenched with misfortune,
I stride on,
plain-speaking,
irreconcilable,
and that means
- I am young.

(I dlia kar'er ne primenimoi

dorogoi,
        obdannoi bedoi,
idu,
    priamoi,
            neprimirimyi
chto oznachaet
            - molodoi.)

"Young" in Evtushenko's vocabulary is an approximate equivalent of "naked" in the Beat idiom. Only the young, that is, the open, deconditioned consciousness can contain and reflect on the complexity of life, and only the "young," therefore, are truly alive. The only truth, according to Evtushenko, is the subjective truth of the inner voice, and any outer authority imposed on the individual consciousness is false. In many early poems, Evtushenko lashes out against careerism; to pursue a career means to conform, to loose one's personal integrity: "I shall therefore pursue my career/ by trying not to pursue one." (Ia delaiu sebe kar'eru/ tem chto ne delaiu ee).[58] He has always resisted any labels that were imposed on him, and as he did in fact make a spectacular career, the attempts to label him have been numerous. In the 1972 "I'm not playing at being a democrat" (Ia ne igraiu v demokrata), each stanza deals with a label : " I'm not playing at being a democrat/ ..a humanist/ ..a liberal/ ..a patriot/ ..a citizen of the world..,"and the poem ends:

And to the detriment of demagogues
I throw myself into battle each day
and die for freedom --
the freedom to be myself.

(I demagogam ne v ugodu
ia kazhdyi den' brosaius' v boi
i umiraiu za svobodu -
svobodu byt' samim soboi.)

Thus, Evtushenko's celebrations of his own contradictory self are, at the same time, an attack on any authorities that impose themselves on the individual consciousness; he wants to show that real liberation starts from within and does not come in the form of "instructions" from without. Freedom means being oneself, it does not mean having power, since power turns a person into an "overseer" (nadsmotrshchik): "But we,/ the overseers,/ are slaves to other overseers." (No ved' i my/ nadsmotrshchiki, -/ raby drugikh nadsmotrshchikov).[59]

In innumerable poems, Evtushenko insists on his own Russianness, often in the same breath as talking about his international concerns. In the 1972 "I would like to " (Ia khotel by), the poet expresses his desire to identify with every living creature on earth, but:

...when I die -
having kicked up my heels like some Siberian Villon,
put me
not in the Chilean,
not in the Italian soil --
but in our Russian soil
on a gentle hill,
a green one,
where for the first time
I
felt I was everybody.

(...kogda umru
nashumevshim sibirskim Viionom,-
polozhite menia
ne v chiliiskuiu
ne v ital'ianskuiu zemliu -
v nashu russkuiu zemliu
na tikhom kholme,
na zelenom,
gde vpervye
sebia
ia pochuvstvoval vsemi.)

No doubt, Evtushenko's image of himself was intended to represent all of the unspoilt young minds beginning to think for themselves after Stalin's death. Like Ginsberg, he saw himself as a spokesman for "the best people of the generation" (luchshie iz pokoleniia)[61], and the people he portrayed as "the best", like Ginsberg's heroes, were far from coinciding with the official ideal.

Despite his later position as an official celebrity, Evtushenko was a rather maladjusted teenager and young man. He was expelled from several schools and later from the Komsomol; to his mother's grief, he showed no interest in "serious" study or work, and before the publication of his first book and his consequent admission into the Gorkii Literary Institute he spent several years doing nothing but playing soccer and bombarding newspaper editors with his poems. "The street brought me up ," he says in the Autobiography[62],- " I fled to another school - the noisy school of the city, where it smelt of snow, gasoline, and smoking cigarettes..,"[63] and the people of the streets, vendors, sales girls, prostitutes and bums do appear in his poems. " 'The Nihilist'"

("Nigilist"), 1957[64], is a portrait of a young stiliaga : he wears tight pants, and he likes Hemingway, Picasso, and heated discussions; his honest, working relatives deplore the fact that he is such a "nihilist". However, in the end the nihilist proves himself by giving up his own life to save a friend.

"'The Nihilist'" is a rather sentimental and bathetic poem, and unfortunately the same is true of many of the "I"-poems. Although he has written a long poem in praise of "Humor", 1960, the invincible rebel against whom the strongest "Tsars/ Kings/ Emperors" are powerless, humor is not Evtushenko's strong point. He writes in "Prologue: "I'm heaped as high/ as a truck with fresh mown hay", but he is not capable of Maiakovskii's "I'm a cloud in pants." Nor is he capable of Ginsberg's total self-revelation or his mock self-aggrandizement in a poem like "America." Consequently, many poems fail as attempts to disclose complexity, attempts to speak as an individual for all individuals against repressive simplification of life.

Evtushenko sees his own greatest strength in his honesty about his weaknesses - "We are showing our strength of character/ by allowing ourselves weaknesses," he writes in "Immobility" (Nepodvizhnost'), 1969, and in "Unrequited Love" (Nerazdelennaia liubov'), 1971, he speaks of the "deadly mental health" of those who are incapable of conflicting feelings.

Aksyonov has spoken of the "aura of contradictoriness and unpredictability"[65] which surrounded Evtushenko (and Voznesensky) in the early sixties, fading quickly towards the end of the decade. In the case of Evtushenko's self-image, I think it is true to say that because it does not change, but rather repeats an increasingly familiar pattern of contradiction, it takes on a reassuring simplicity and predictability in which the poet seems to take refuge from real complexity; increasingly, he seems to be talking to himself about himself.

4.1.4. Digression: The American Poems of Voznesenskii and Evtushenko.

In 1961 Voznesensky and Evtushenko visited the U.S. for the first time, and since then they seem to have taken every opportunity to return. To both of them, America became an important source of poetic inspiration.

At a glance, the American themes covered by the two poets - Beatniks, Negroes, strip-tease, spy movies, smog, ideological disillusionment, the Vietnam war etc. - seem to indicate that they are projecting an image of America consistent with the Soviet stereotype, that they, like Maiakovsky in his day, are looking at

American decadence from a point of view of moral superiority. As the following examples will show, this is not the case: neither Evtushenko nor Voznesensky can be accused of simply trying to score political points by concentrating on negative aspects of American life.

Some critics, on the other hand, have suggested[66] that the real attraction of the American theme for these two poets was the fact that, under its cover, they could make points about their own, Soviet reality, expressing their views indirectly, but more strongly than was otherwise possible. Especially in Evtushenko's case, this 'Aesopian' aspect cannot be ignored, but, on the other hand, the real fascination with America in the works of both poets is too obvious to be overlooked.

It is, however, not the poets' image of America as such that concerns us here. Having found similarities between the New Wave reaction to Soviet reality and the Beat reaction to American reality, the question to be asked here is : when faced with American reality, do the Russians see what the Beats see, can their reaction in any sense be called Beat ?

In his introduction to The Triangular Pear, which was published in 1962, Voznesensky wrote :

> I am working on a great theme - the "discovery of America". It is based on my American impressions. But in the process of writing, life, memories and landscapes of Russia and the Baltic burst into the narrative.... The poem drowned like an overcrowded ship. But alongside it arose an independent organism, a "poem of lyrical digressions". Poems reshuffled themselves arbitrarily, outside theme and geography, like thoughts in the head.[67]

The result is a book without ideo-political overtones, in which "Russian" and "American" poems coexist as equal expressions of the poet's consciousness.

The image of the Beatniks in "Beatnik's Monologue" (Monolog bitnika) (as well as in "Rock'n'Roll") is reminiscent of Ginsberg's portrait of his friends in "Howl:"

With rocket-dromes reverberating,
                    With atomic rain pouring,
The times spat at me,
I spit at the times ![68]

(Raketodromami gremia,
                    dozhdiami atomnymi reia,
plevalo vremia na menia,

pluiu na vremia!)

The only reference to the American context are the words "Beatnik" and "Michigan," and the first part of the poem ends with a warning, not to America, but to the "era:" "I am Judgement. Pray, era !" (Ia strashnyi sud. Molis', epokha !).

The second part, "The Revolt of the Machines", deals with the enslavement of man by technology, and it is obvious that the robots in this poem are the ones that later migrated into "Oza:"

"Give me your wife !
I have a weakness," it says,"for brunettes. I love them
at 30 RPM."[69]

(Otdai, - govorit, - zhenu !
Imeiu slabost' k briunetkam, - govorit. -
Liubliu na tridtsati oborotakh.)

The technology theme is also dealt with in "New York Bird" (N'iu-iorkskaia ptitsa), in which a strange bird with the body of an airplane and the head of a woman[70] lands on the windowsill of the poet's New York hotel room. At first, the poet assumes that this creature - half robot, half spirit, half innocent, half depraved - is "the soul of America," but then it turns out that she is the soul of the atomic age, and he, as the poet of the atomic age, responds to her :

Something strange from without
rises up in me
as in a branching retort-

the atomic age groans in this hotel room...[71]

(chto-to strannoe izvne
kak v sosude soobshchaiushchemsia
podymaetsia vo mne

vek atomnyi stonet v spal'ne...)

Evtushenko's "Girl Beatnik" (Bitnitsa) from 1961 is a look at the world from the point of view of a New York Beatnik. She believes in nothing, rejects everything "from bibles to newspapers" except for "the twist." The world is cruel, and "it is no accident/

that the tv aerials above the city/ are like crucifixions without Christ" (i nad gorodom nesprosta/ televizionnye antenny/ kak paspiatia bez Khrista). But if Christ is not in sight, neither is Marx, and this is noteworthy, since Evtushenko has, in fact, used American material for propaganda purposes in poems written both before and after his first visit to the U.S.[72] Equally interesting is the fact that the girl's appearance is not, as Reilly points out[73], that of a typical Beatnik. While Voznesensky's Beatniks wear sandals, Evtushenko's girl walks on "spiked heels" which are, in fact, more characteristic of the Soviet stiliaga.

Evtushenko seems to accept the view that the Beatnik, rejecting the values of the older generation, of society, believes in nothing - which is, as we have seen, the official Soviet view, as well as the opinion of the general American public. This point of view is reinforced in Evtushenko's other Beatnik poem "Beatniks' Monologue" (Monolog bitnikov), also from 1961, in which the Beatniks are portrayed as victims, not of a cruel world, but of their own "tired irony." But the characters in this poem have lost any resemblance to beatniks. When they say "and our hands grinned ironically as they ~~clapped~~/ and our legs grinned ironically as they marched" (i ruki usmekhalis' aplodiruia/ i nogi usmekhalis' marshiruia), they are, whether this is intended or not, much more like the cynics and careerists among his own generation of Soviet intellectuals, whom Evtushenko has attacked in many other poems.

As would probably be expected of them, both Voznesensky and Evtushenko have, written poems on the subject of American negroes. But the image of the negro found in Voznesensky's "Negroes sing" (Poiut negry), 1961, and Evtushenko's "Two Negroes" (Dva negra), 1972, is not that of the despondent victim of oppression. Rather, both poets come close to Kerouac's romantic portrayal of the black man as a naturally Beat character who is in touch with life's foundations and who is proud and free in his suffering. In Voznesensky's poem, the black man, an outsider and an artist, represents the human being as subject and creator, and the poet identifies with him :

> We negroes, we poets,
> in whom the planets splash,
> lie like sacks full of legends and stars.
>
> Trample upon us
> and you kick the firmament.
> The whole universe howls
> beneath your boot ![74]

(My -- negry, my -- poety,
v nas pleshchutsia planety.
Tak i lezhim kak meshki polnye zvezdami
i legendami.

Kogda nas b'iut nogami,
pinaiut nebosvod.
U vas pod sapogami
vselennaia oret !)

One of Evtushenko's "Two Negroes" is actually a destitute white, on the run from the police. He lies down shivering on a beach next to a majestic black man, and, envious of the negro's dignified calm and enjoyment of the moment, comes to the conclusion that " there are no blacks and whites/ in the whole wide world there are only overseers/ and negroes" (ni chernykh, ni belykh,/ na belom svete est' nadsmotrshchiki/ i negry). (The russian "belyi" means not only 'wide', but also 'white'.)

In 1963, the year of Khrushchev's campaign against the young writers, Voznesensky wrote "Marilyn Monroe's Monologue" (Monolog Merlin Monro). The poem has a familiar theme : the objectification of the human being; and Marilyn Monroe is one in a long line of female representatives of suffering humanity in Voznesensky's poetry. Marilyn is alone in an unreal, mechanical world. When she appears on the giant screen of a drive-in cinema, she is coveted by cars, and the image of the cars as the subjects of the world runs through the whole poem : caresses leave the imprint of tires on cheeks, hands smell of gas etc..The suicide of Marilyn Monroe is inevitable; to be human in the world of cars is, in fact, suicide :" It's suicide to fight against the trash,/ it's suicide to make peace with them" (samoubiistvo - borot'sia s drianiu,/ samoubiistvo - mirit'sia s nimi).

In Evtushenko's "Monologue of a Broadway Actress" (Monolog brodveiskoi aktrisy), 1967, which may be inspired by Voznesenskii's poem rather than by any American impressions, a burnt-out actress, demanding a role, expresses the individual's feeling of powerlessness against the machinery of modern society.

Voznesensky's "New York Buttons" from 1968 describes the carnivalistic spectacle of the hippies in Greenwich Village who wear their beliefs in the form of printed badges. Allen Ginsberg appears in the midst of things and the poet calls out to him :"Leap over Death's carnival/ Allen, in your underwear !" (Nad smertel'nym karnavalom,/ Alen, vyskochi v ispodnem !). An image of a giraffe which leaves its spots behind and wanders off covered in "Make love not war" badges, seems to imply that badges are artificial, counterfeit ideas, that they signify a lack rather than a variety of beliefs: "Irony is God today" (Bog - ironiia segodnia). Two graffiti-like statements in quotation marks divide the poem up : " God lives at 18 Pasteur st., rear entrance please" (Bog zhivet na ulitse Pastera, 18. Vkhod so dvora), "God has moved to 43, Avenue of Peace, ring twice" (Bog pereekhal na prospekt Mira, 43. 2 zvonka.). If God moved from a street named after a scientist to one named after peace, is it because science, once hailed as man's salvation, has turned into a threat to peace ? Indeed, to the poet, the whole hippie carnival seems based on fear, a fear which he himself shares and is defenseless against :

> Oh, Time,
> will I be able to read what is written
>   in your eyes,
> rushing at me,
>   growing bigger and bigger, like head-lights?
> Will I have time to appreciate this joke of yours ?
>
> (Akh, Vremia,
> sumeiu li ia prochitat', chto napisano
>   v tvoikh ochakh,
> mchashchikhsia na menia,
>   uvelichivaias', kak fary?
> Uspeiu li otsenit' khokhmu tvoiu ?)

In Evtushenko's "Smog"[75], also from 1968, the New York smog grows into a metaphor for a state of moral confusion similar to the one described in Voznesensky's "New York Buttons." Struggling for breath in his hotel room, the poet hears the voices of several American colleagues. Allen Ginsberg's advice is to stop breathing, since the atmosphere is immoral. As with the Beatniks, Evtushenko seems to identify Allen Ginsberg with total moral pessimism, apparently failing to see the religious aspect of the Beat vision; but then the final word is given to Whitman, who encourages humanity to take a deep breath, all together.

Evtushenko has, moreover, written a large number of poems in the form of "Monologues" by various representatives of American society ("Monologue of an American Writer" (Monolog amerikanskogo pisatelia), also known as "Conversation" (Razgovor), 1961, "Monologue of an American Poet" (Monolog amerikanskogo poeta), 1967, "Monologue of an American Wanderer" (Monolog amerikanskogo brodiagi), also known as "New York Elegy" (N'iu-iorkskaia elegiia), 1967, "Monologue of a Blue Fox in an Alaskan Fur Farm" (Monolog golubogo pestsa v aliaskinskoi zveroferme), 1967, "Monologue of an American Artist" (Monolog amerikanskogo khudozhnika), 1972 etc.), many of which have little if any American flavour. "You're a courageous man/ they tell me", says the "American Writer", and then goes on to explain that he is not really, he has simply done what he thought right, simply told the truth. But the category of courage is much more readily applied to a Soviet than to an American writer, and the Soviet associations take over the poem when the "American Writer" says "I wrote poetry./ I never informed on anybody" (donosok ne pisal). Of particular interest is the "Monologue of a Blue Fox", a psychological portrait of an animal born in captivity. The fox tries to escape from the fur farm, but returns because:

Who was born in a cage will cry for a cage,
and with horror I understood that I love
this cage where they hide me behind a screen
and the fur farm - my motherland.

(Kto v kletke zachat, tot po kletke plachet,
i s uzhasom ia ponial chto liubliu
tu kletku gde menia za setku priachut
i zveroferma - rodina moia.)

At the same time, the fox has no illusions about his "motherland:"

I wish I were naive like my father,
but I was born in captivity. I'm not like that.
He who feeds me will betray me.
He who fondles me will kill me.

(Khotel by ia naivnum byt' kak predok,
no ia rozhden v nevole. Ia ne tot.
Kto menia kormit - tem ia budu predan.
Kto menia gladit - tot menia ub'et.)

The poem is strikingly similar to Vladimir Vysotskii's poem/song "The Wolf Hunt:"

A wolf can't break with tradition,
because in our childhood, as blind cubs,
when we sucked the she-wolf,
we sucked in "Never go beyond the flags."

(Volk ne mozhet narushit' traditsii,
Vidno, v detstve, - slepye shchenki,
My, volchata, sosali volchitsu,

I vsosali:"Nel'zia za flazhki."[76]

The difference between the two poems is that in Vysotskii's, which was written in the late 70s and never published in the Soviet Union, the Soviet reference is clear (the wolves are fenced in by red flags), and there are two alternative endings: one, in which the wolf sees a hunter point his gun at him, and one in which the wolf finally decides to cross the line of flags, as he has nothing to lose but freedom. All the same, there can be little doubt that Evtushenko's poem, despite the Alaskan setting, was perceived by the Soviet reader in much the same way as was Vysotskii's 10 years later. It is noteworthy that the motif of the animal, captive or hunted, in relation to human society, symbolizing the human being in relation to a dehumanized world, or, more narrowly, the poet/outsider in relation to the mass society, is also present in the work of Voznesenskii ("Hunting a Hare" (Okhota na zaitsa), 1963, "My Achilles Heart" (Akhillesovo serdtse), 1965) and Bella Akhmadulina ("The Panther" (Bars), 1961).

As this incomplete survey of their American poetry shows, both Voznesensky and Evtushenko write about Beat characters and Beat themes such as dehumanization and the search for spiritual values; but these are also dominant themes in their poetry in general. Both Evtushenko and Voznesensky mention Allen Ginsberg's name (although they interpret him differently), but rather than suggesting that they are directly influenced by Ginsberg's vision of America, we can conclude that the poets' point of view and their concerns are the same whether they are looking at Soviet or American reality. With some of Evtushenko's poems, one gets the impression that this is so because he has not really discovered America; Voznesensky's poems seem more firmly tied to original, personal impressions of America.

4.2. THE QUEST.

4.2.0.

When, in chapter 4.1, we investigated the nature of their revolt, defining it as a quest for spiritual liberation, we inevitably also touched upon the positive values of the Beat Generation and New Wave poets, on what Kerouac called "IT." Paul Christensen, writing about the Beats, aptly sums up the main motivation of this type of revolt and the forms which the search for "IT" must take:

> Redemption and earthly salvation ... took the form of a belief in a transcending spirit that represented the ultimate and inviolate unity of things of nature, which no system of humanity could ever fully dissolve. Awareness itself, the reckless plunge and immersion into the whole of experience, was an act of personal salvation because it renewed the feeling of complete participation of self with world and because it pushed back the limits set around life by the new rational ethos.[1]

The aim of this chapter is to analyze specific Beat and New Wave poems which project the ideal and which are comparable from a thematic point of view.

The Beat and New Wave poets shared from the beginning an insistence on subjectivity: the significance of life was, as Alan Watts puts it[2], to be sought in "subjective experience" rather than in "objective achievement." Many poems were dedicated to the discovery of an infinite inner world in which the objective truth of linear time and rationality seemed to be suspended. As demonstrated by "Howl", joy could be derived from any experience extreme or strong enough to explore new depths of the inner world. Emotional intensity itself as well as the carnival of experiences which induced it - typically love, sex, drug experiments, creative activity - became frequent subjects of poetry. But the inward journey had a purpose beyond that of self-discovery, it was also a search for a new consciousness which would permit the reintegration of the individual into human community and nature on the basis of new, more spontaneous, free and innocent relations. Discovering human nature through themselves, the Beat and New Wave poets had visions in which oppositions inherent in their cultures such as spiritual versus material, conscious versus unconscious were dissolved in a new oneness of self with world. In the pursuit of this vision, some of the Beats found inspiration in Zen buddhism. The New Wave poets were, naturally, not openly religious, but, especially in the works of Voznesensky and Akhmadulina, there is evidence of a kind of

Christian mysticism reminiscent of Pasternak, a religious attitude which is in many ways comparable to that of the Beats, quite apart from the fact that it was as alien to Soviet culture as Zen was to American culture.

Discussing the affinities of Zen and psychoanalysis, Erich Fromm writes:

> The aim of Zen is enlightenment: the immediate, unreflected grasp of reality, without affective contamination and intellectualization, the realization of the relation of myself to the Universe. This new experience is a repetition of the pre-intellectual, immediate grasp of the child, but on a new level .... While the child's experience, that of immediacy and oneness, lies before the experience of alienation and the subject-object split, the enlightenment experience lies after it.[3]

Enlightenment in this sense is as relevant to the New Wave poets as to the Beats, and the same could be said of such Zen categories as 'nowness', 'isness', and 'oneness'. In the poetry of both groups, as we shall see, certain exemplary characters seem to represent the 'enlightened' relation to life : the 'angel', the woman, the child, the negro, the artist, the madman, the animal.

While the twofold movement outlined above - inwards toward the human soul and outwards toward a new community - is common to both movements as a whole, the Americans were, not surprisingly, much more eclectic in their search for what Gary Snyder called "a third way."[4] Neither Snyder's own blend of Buddhism, American Indian spirituality, anarchism and woodsmanship, through which he seems to have created a new culture for himself, nor Michael McClure's "Meat Science," has any counterpart among the visions of the Russians. Within the New Wave there is a greater convergence of poetic ideals, presumably as a result of the greater pressure to adopt official ideals. I have chosen to include poems by Voznesensky and Akhmadulina in this chapter, but it would have been possible in many cases to find poem-by-poem equivalents in the work of Evtushenko and Okudzhava. Of the Beats, Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg are most immediately comparable to Voznesensky and Akhmadulina. Ferlinghetti and Voznesensky are comparable both in the way they look at the world and in the way they talk about it. And although the mere thought of comparing herself to Ginsberg made Akhmadulina giggle[5], there are in fact important parallels in the early poetry of both poets. Both display an enormous vulnerability matched by a longing for a community.

4.2.1 Ferlinghetti: "Making love was a means of proving life existed."

The dominant theme in Lawrence Ferlinghetti's first two volumes of poetry, Pictures of a Gone World[6] 1955, and A Coney Island of the Mind, 1958[7], is the existentialist quest for authentic being or "superreality" as Ferlinghetti calls it[8]. The loss of the sense of reality, alienation, in Ferlinghetti's poetic universe results from a world view based on intellectualization, and from the linear time concept inherent in the ideology of consumption and material progress which the poet sees all around him. Liberation from these is to be found in "the true mad north / of introspection,"[9] in Ferlinghetti's version of Paradise, where the mind's "fountains of imagination" spring freely and where there are no other authorities, above or below:

> Not like Dante
>   discovering a commedia
>   upon the slopes of heaven
> I would paint a different kind
>   of Paradiso
> in which the people would be naked
>   as they always are
>   in scenes like that
>   because it is supposed to be
>   a painting of their souls
> but there would be no anxious angels telling them
>   how heaven is
>   the perfect picture of
>   a monarchy
>   and there would be no fires burning
>   in the hellish holes below
>   in which I might have stepped
>   nor any altars in the sky except
>   fountains of imagination[10]

The one similarity between Ferlinghetti's Paradise and other "scenes like that" would be the nakedness of the people. In their state of original innocence and timelessness, freed from such manifestations of linear time as changing fashions, the people would, according to Ferlinghetti, express their souls through their naked bodies, body and soul would be one.

Ferlinghetti starts by pointing out that he would paint his paradise, not like Dante who wrote his; and throughout Pictures of a Gone World and A Coney Island of the Mind, references to painters, sculptors, individual paintings, or the art of painting are abundant. On the symbolic level, Ferlinghetti seems to juxtapose painting and language as modes of communication. Painting is the privileged mode because it is closer to the unconscious (which also discourses in images) and therefore less controlled than verbal communication, and because, being a spatial rather than temporal art form, it seems to suspend time. Because of these qualities, Ferlinghetti uses painting as a symbol of a coherent, timeless and therefore more real reality. Language, on the other hand, is often portrayed as a source of alienation: it automatically reflects conventional, rational thinking, and, by intellectualizing perception, separates the 'I' from the world. In Pictures "5", Ferlinghetti describes "the happiest painter / in all the world" as one who has no mouth at all, only a "Hungry Eye" (Incidentally, "Hungry I" is the name of the striptease club which can be seen from the window of Ferlinghetti's City Lights office. When Ferlinghetti calls himself a poet of the streets, one should apparently take it quite literally). Trying, as it were, to create 'paintings' out of words, Ferlinghetti is at pains to break down the inertia and the inherent presuppositions of the language : the symbolic opposition of painting and language translates into a conscious utilization of the interplay between image and statement; often, conflicting jargons are introduced into the text of poems; idiomatic expressions and cliches are either taken literally or slightly twisted; punning is a favourite device; the breaking up and various setting of the lines on the page function as a secondary, visual accentuation system, as in the poetry of Voznesensky and Evtushenko.

A Coney Island "14" is about Chagall's "Horse with Violin in Mouth" and, like so many of Ferlinghetti's early poems, juxtaposes two different 'realities'. One reality, the rational one, is contained in a statement by Chagall's mother, representing forbidding, parental authority : "Don't let that horse/ eat that violin/ cried Chagall's mother." To the mother, the combination of something 'elevated' like a violin and something 'base' like a horse is not permissible, and the logical development of the situation "Horse with Violin in Mouth" would be for the horse to munch and swallow the violin. The other reality is that of the painting itself, in which horse and violin belong naturally together, as sensuality and spirituality do for Ferlinghetti. This other reality triumphs when Chagall actually enters his painting:

> He jumped up upon the horse
>   and rode away
>   waving the violin
> And then with a low bow gave it
> to the first naked nude he ran across
>
> And there were no strings
>   attached.

The final puns involving "bow" and "strings" are an additional assurance that this is reality, not puppet theatre, but it is also an actual recreation, in words, of Chagall's playfulness.

Pictures "24" deals with the problem of retaining one's sense of reality despite the alienating forces in the world, and the first line seems to imply that you have to be some kind of acrobat to do it : "Picasso's acrobats epitomize the world." Picasso's painting seems real to the speaker of the poem, but the world surrounding him does not. He has not entered any of the doors of the "eighty churches in Paris", behind which there would be the promise of eternal life for the spirit. The one door he does enter, that of his hotel, seems threatening, it "smiled terribly." This door, presumably, leads to the life of the body, the enjoyment of which is tempered by the terrible knowledge of death.

Communication in words is another closed door for the speaker : "and words were trombones/ incoherent parrots / clattering idols."

The source of the unreality surrounding the speaker is separation, the separation of the spiritual and the sensual, the separation of words and things. But at night the speaker rediscovers the coherent reality of Picasso's painting in the 'room' of his own unconscious mind, in a dream about Picasso :

> but that night I dreamt of Picasso
> opening doors and closing exits
> opening doors and closing exits in the world
>
> I dreamt
> he painted a Picasso
> in my room
> shouting all the time
> Pas symbolique !
> C'est pas
> symbolique !

Thus, it is the doors of the mind that one must open in order to see that this world is the real one.

If art can open the doors of the mind, so can love. Andy Raffine, the main protagonist of Ferlinghetti's novel Her,1960,says: "Making love was a means of proving life existed, of proving that love itself, spiritual love, was something that existed. Making love with bodies was a kind of speech to prove it, a language of being."[11] In Pictures "8" the realities of love and art converge, as the speaker mentally compares "Sarolla's women in their picture hats/ stretched upon his canvas beaches" with a beach scene he himself has observed. The speaker finds the paintings and his own memory real in the same way : "I cannot help but think/ that their 'reality'/ was almost as real as/ my memory of today," and in this he is opposed to the voice that asks "And were they fraudulent pictures/ of the world/ the way the light played on them/ creating illusions/ of love ?" Typically, the rationalizing point of view that reduces Sarolla's achievement to a matter of lighting technique is introduced in a statement which acts like a foreign body in the fabric of the poem. Next, the statement is countered by a visual representation of the remembered beach scene as an orgasm of light:

> when the last sun hung on the hills
> and I heard the day falling
> like the gulls that fell
> almost to land
> while the last picknickers lay
> and loved in the blowing yellow broom
> resisted and resisting
> tearing themselves apart
> again
> again
> until the last hot hung climax
> which could no longer be resisted
> made them moan
>
> And night's trees stood up.

In ordinary language, day rises and night falls, but here this linguistic 'truth' is suspended ("the day falling," "night's trees stood up") along with the idea of day as beginning and night as end, as everything joins together in the moment. The people are an integral part of the landscape, it seems to be their lovemaking that causes "night's trees" to stand up. This last image presumably refers to the city lights going on along the beach and is thus a description of the man-made city in terms of nature. The experience of oneness, the unity of the ideal and the actual, heaven and earth, is what equates Sarolla's paintings and the speaker's memory, making both "super real ."

A Coney Island "24" is also a love poem realized as a beach scene. Here, the poet's attention has been caught by a certain contradictoriness in the behaviour of people on the beach. They seem to reproduce their habitual domesticity by sticking together in family groups and settling down in the sand with lots of food and things, but the next moment they get up, laughing and screaming, and run towards the embrace of the sea, as if nothing had yet come between man and the elements :

We squat upon the beach of love
among Picasso mandolins struck full of sand
and buried catspaws that know no sphinx
and picnic papers
dead crab's claws
and starfish prints

We squat upon the beach of love
among the beached mermaids
with their bawling babies and bald husbands
and homemade wooden animals
with icecream spoons for feet
which cannot walk or love
except to eat

We squat upon the brink of love
and are secure as only squatters are
among the puddled leavings
of salt sex's tides
and the sweet semen rivulets
and limp buried peckers
in the sand's soft flesh

And still we laugh
and still we run
and still we throw ourselves
upon love's boats
but it is deeper
and much later
than we think
and all goes down
and all our lovebuoys fail us
And we drink and drown

We are told from the beginning that we are dealing with the "beach of love," but in the course of the first three stanzas it becomes clear that being on the beach of love means being out of love, "beached" like the mermaids. Love itself is characterized only indirectly, through the things that are missing from the pictur: music (of the mandolins), mystery (of the sphinx), movement (of the paws, claws, mermaids, feet, peckers). What is described directly through the images of beach behaviour is a kind of existence defined as "squatting," and because of the generalized first person plural subject we can take this to mean the way people live in modern society.

Squatting is the position in which we feel most secure, being huddled protectively around our own bodies and not raising our heads above those of the others. Squatting means conforming, and conforming in turn means concentrating on material existence, on the life of the body, which is characterized in the poem in such terms as "buried," "dead," "eat," "leavings." Consumption seems to be the only activity going on. No great distinction is made between things and people on the beach: "bawling babies and bald husbands/ and homemade wooden animals," and love in this world is reduced to satisfying or rather pacifying the sexual instinct, transforming "salt sex's tides" into "sweet semen rivulets" the way the withdrawing sea sometimes leaves little pools on the beach.

Larry Smith, author of Lawrence Ferlinghetti : Poet-at-Large, finds the imagery of "24" "more irrational, more self-generating, less interpretive" than is usually the case in Ferlinghetti and cites the poem as an example of Ferlinghetti's "ability on occasion to tap his truer source of the surreal."[12] Generally, although his imagery does have a surrealistic flavour at times, I believe one has to agree with Ferlinghetti himself, who is agreeing with his friend, the surrealist poet Philip Lamantia when he says : "but I had the feeling he thought I was doctoring up my spontaneous visions and putting 'thought' in it... In fact, I was doctoring them up. Hyping them up, might be more accurate."[13] In the particular case of "24", I believe the source of its imagery is literary rather than surreal and can be identified as T.S.Eliot's "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock." A quick glance reveals that such particular phenomena as beach, missing music, feline associations, crab's claws, mermaids, baldness, icecream, spoons and drowning occur in both poems. On the thematic level, there are enough points of contact for "24" to be read as a deliberate comment on "The Lovesong."

Both poems declare themselves to be lovepoems, both turn out to be more about non-love. Both deal with the problem of unreality and both investigate the idea of love as a possible means of restoring the sense of reality or "being." Both J. Alfred Prufrock and the people of "24" are introduced in a state of lifeless passivity, but there are different reasons for their passivity. Ferlinghetti's people are so absorbed in the processes of physical existence that they are aware of themselves only as bodies, that is, things. Prufrock, on the other hand, is totally alienated from his body; to him, the body with its signs of physical decay represents the process of dying, and his whole intellect is therefore mobilized in a struggle to repress his physical instincts. This struggle reduces Prufrock to a state of passivity which is, in fact, death-like, but at the same time his consciousness is so highly developed that he is aware of his condition. This, according to "The Lovesong," is what being human is about: realizing that there is a terrible chasm in life between the real and the ideal, the body and the soul, and that no human communication, not even love, can therefore be both real and ideal; dreaming of a love that would bridge the gap, yet knowing it is impossible. Prufrock's dream is of love as a kind of garden under the sea, described in the last lines of the poem : "We have lingered in the chambers of the sea/ By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown/ Till human voices wake us, and we drown."[14] In myth, humans perish when they yield to the superhuman temptation of the mermaids; in "The Lovesong," on the other hand, it is the "human voices," our very humanity which is fatal.

In Ferlinghetti's "24", the word "love" is used as generously as in an average pop song, whereas the word 'sea' never actually occurs. The significance of the abused and devaluated word 'love' is transferred onto the tabooed 'sea', and the sea is implied everywhere: the graphic shape of the poem is reminiscent of waves rising and falling, and the substitution of the word "brink" for "beach" in stanza 3 prepares us for the actual meeting with the sea in stanza 4. The people of "24" may be unaware of the ocean within them, but because they are "still" human, they will discover it through love. When they encounter love, they will try to stay in control, but eventually they surrender : "And we drink and drown". Drowning , here, does not mean perishing, rather, 'drinking' and 'drowning' signify the conscious and unconscious involvement in love. Thus, while the last line of "24" echoes the last line of "The Lovesong," it is entirely different from it in meaning.

The theme of 'lateness' in relation to love is present in both "The Lovesong" and "24." Prufrock feels that it is too late for him to try love, because he has had too much experience to give up control and surrender himself. In "24", lateness refers to a late stage of civilization which has produced a society geared exclusively towards consumption and thus alienated human beings from their own nature. In A Coney Island "1", Ferlinghetti compares the people in Goya's paintings who are so "bloody real" with the "maimed citizens" of contemporary America who exist in a landscape of "freeways fifty lanes wide/ on a concrete continent/ spaced with bland billboards," and he comes to the conclusion that "They are the same people," only the modern Americans are "further from home." Alienation, to Ferlinghetti, is not an inevitable fact of the human condition, rather, it is an unnatural condition which can be overcome by opening up to art, to love, to the world.

The "Dog" in Ferlinghetti's poem of that name[15] is not alienated, he has the kind of Beat, possibly Buddhist consciousness which allows him to have "something to say/ about reality/ and how to see it." Like the poet himself in so many other poems, the dog "trots freely in the street," he does not believe in the authority of policemen or that of congressman Doyle of the House Comittee on Un-American Activities ("Congressman Doyle is just another/ fire hydrant"), he has "his own free world" inside, and this is the best position for "touching and testing everything/ investigating everything." Towards the end of the trot and of the poem, the dog literally turns into an image of open-mindedness or 'nakedness':

> as if he is just about to have
> his picture taken
> for Victor Records
> listening for
> His Master's Voice
> and looking
> like a living questionmark
> into the
> great gramaphone
> of puzzling existence
> with its wondrous hollow horn
> which always seems
> just about to spout forth
> some victorious answer
> to everything.

4.2.2. Voznesensky :"I feel therefore I am."

Like Ferlinghetti, Voznesensky is a painter, and his interest in visual art is often reflected in his poetry, for instance in poems about Goya, Gauguin, Chagall, Miro. His original intention was to become an architect, but when, after five years of study at the Moscow Architectural Institute, his final project was destroyed in a fire, he gave up that career altogether. This event is celebrated in the 1958 poem "Fire in the Architectural Institute:"[16]

> Fire in the Architectural Institute !
> Through all the rooms and drawings
> like an amnesty through jails -
> Fire ! Fire !
>
> (Pozhar v Arkhitekturnom !
> Po zalam, chertezham,
> Amnistiei po t'iurmam -
> Pozhar ! Pozhar !)

The poem immediately establishes an opposition between the Institute as a confined, prison-like world and the fire as a liberating force, and this opposition is then extended throughout the remaining nine stanzas as the fire progresses, eventually burning the Institute down to the ground.

The speaker of the poem is a student at the Architectural Institute. In stanzas 2-5, he is a spectator to the fire, worried and helpless as he sees his work of five years going up in smoke. In this part of the poem, then, the speaker, still part of the Institute, regards the fire as a violent intruder. All the same, the prison imagery in reference to the Institute is subtly developed, for instance through the use of the word "vygovora" (reprimands) in stanza 3, and through the rhyming of the words "diplomniki" (candidates) and "pod plombami" (under seals) which adds to "diplomniki" a nuance of being sealed away, that is, imprisoned:

> And we're already candidates.
> It's time for our defense.
> But crackling away, sealed in a cupboard
> Are all my reprimands.
>
> (A my uzhe diplomniki.
> Nam zashchishchat' pora.
> Treshchat v shkafu pod plombami
> Moi vygovora !)

The expression "five summers and five winters" in stanza 5 refers, of course, to the time spent studying architecture, but with its emphasis on the duration of those years, it makes one think of a prison term.

Although the fire is seen through the eyes of the shocked student, it is not without attraction. Stanza 2 describes the fire as it lights up the dark windows of the building - it looks as if a "red-assed gorilla" (exploiting the phonetic proximity of the words 'gorilla' and 'goret" (to burn)) is climbing the "sleepy facade:"

> Up the sleepy facade
> shamelessly, mischievously
> like a red-assed
> gorilla
> a window climbs
>
> (Po sonnomu fasady
> besstyzhe, ozorno
> gorilloi

krasnozadoiu
vzvivaetsia okno)

The rhyming of the words "fasadu" (facade) and "krasnozadoiu" (red-assed) underlines the irreverent, carnivalistic nature of the fire: suddenly, instead of the respectable facade, the Institute seems to turn its behind on the spectators. Stanza 5 marks the turning point of the poem, as the speaker himself, together with a female fellow student, 'catches fire': "Karinochka Krasil'nikova, Oi, we're on fire !" (Karinochka Krasil'nikova, oi, gorim !) This may be the closest Voznesensky gets to Ginsberg's "O victory / forget your underwear we're free ." From now on the speaker renounces architecture. As Blake and Hayward point out, the "cowsheds covered in cupids/ rec halls in rococo" in stanza 6 seem to refer specifically to the ornate and stylistically confused architecture that was an expression of the Stalin era.[17] The fire is now celebrated, identified with youth, with a tantalizing girl :"you wave your little red skirt/ tease me with your little tongue" (Ty mashesh' krasnoi iubochkoi/ I draznish' iazychkom) (stanza 7), and finally with life itself "You live - you burn" (Zhivesh' - gorish') (stanza 8).

To most Soviet citizens, the colour red signifies first of all Soviet officialdom; in this poem, red is identified with fire and therefore with life, and its connotations are sensual, not ideological. Red is introduced in the image of the red-assed gorilla in stanza 2, and associated with blood in the image of the wounded drafting paper in stanza 4, then echoed in the name of the girl Karinochka Krasil'nikova ('krasnyi' means red) in stanza 5, and finally it is the colour of a girl's skirt and tongue in stanza 7. Red still means revolution, but it is a revolution of love and sensuality.

On one level, then, the fire in the Architectural Institute symbolizes the revolt of life itself against the 'building' of Stalinism, a revolt which Voznesensky's generation identified with. On another level, the fire symbolizes the ecstasy of being alive, awake, moving.

The speaker of the poem is aware that there will be a tomorrow when the fire will be gone, leaving only a "handful of ashes" (gorstochka zoly) from which his compasses may leap up to sting him in the finger (stanza 9). The compasses are a reminder that a new building will have to be projected and, perhaps, that life is not only ecstasy, but also includes such activities as those involved in architecture: measuring, planning calculating. Still, the poem ends on a note of ecstatic beginning:

...Everything is burnt to a cinder.
People are sighing eveywhere.
Is everything over ?
Everything is beginning !
Let's go to the movies !

(...Vse vygorelo nachisto.
Vzdykhaiushchikh polno.
Vse koncheno ?
Vse nachato !
Aida v kino !)

Being alive means changing : "Life is a succession of burnt-out sites" (Zhizn' - smena pepelishch) (stanza 8), and everything begins with the sense of being alive.

The image of fire appears frequently in Voznesensky's early poems celebrating the joy of living. In "Georgian Marketplaces" (Gruzinskie Bazary), 1960, fire has purely sensual connotations. The description of the marketplace is typical of Voznesensky in that the people and the fruits and wine they sell seem to merge, both being manifestations of nature's richness. As usual, Voznesensky attempts to express this interrelatedness through phonetic means, which accounts for the rather far out comparison of the market women with baobab trees ("baby" (women) - "baobabam"). The poem starts with the speaker's declaration of support for the vision of Rubens rather than that of Raphael, but ends with a tribute to the unknown painter who will actually capture life as the speaker sees it - which, to Pasternak, would mean as God created it :

The markets are fires.
Young and fiery
The glowing tan
Of golden hands.

On them the gleam of oil
And golden wine

Long live the master
Who paints them !

(Bazary - pozhary.
Zdes' ognenno, molodo
Pylaiut zagarom
Ne ruki a zoloto.

V nikh otbleski masel
I vin zolotykh

Da zdravstvuet master
Chto vypishet ikh !)

In "The Girl Was Given a Spark" (Dali devochke iskru), 1958, one of several poems dedicated to Bella Akhmadulina, the word 'iskra' (spark) in the first line generates the whole poem, the way a spark can start a fire. From the matrix of 'iskra', the poet derives a series of phonetically related words : 'iriska' (sweetmeat), 'poisk' (seeking), 'risk' (risk), 'olympiiskii' (olympian), 'papiroska' (cigarette), 'iskorka' (little spark), 'iskosa' (wrily), which add up to an impassioned portrait of a girl with a magic gift:

The girl was given a spark
not a sweetmeat, but a spark
the spark of seeking the spark of risking
the spark of olympian impudence !
Now she could set a heart aglow - or burn it
she could
          turn the earth
                              into a blazing hell !
The tip of her cigarette is glowing.
And the girl laughs wrily.

(Dali devochke iskru
ne irisku, a iskru
iskru poiska iskru riska
iskru derzosti olimpiiskoi !
Mozhno serdtse zazhech', mozhno - pech'
mozhno
        zemliu
            k chertiam
                              podzhech' !
V papiroske sgoraet iskorka.
I devchonka smeetsia iskosa.)

If, in "Fire in the Architectural Institute", architecture is portrayed as an obstacle to freedom, this does not mean that Voznesensky has lost his fascination with architecture as art. As Nilsson points out, Voznesensky uses architectural symbols in a way that is reminiscent of Osip Mandelshtam:

> ... and on one important point both poets agree: the striking thing with poetry as well as with architecture is that they are both able to transform the weight and earth-boundness of the material into something light, airy, almost transparent; to liberate us from our attachment to time and reality.[18]

Thus, in "New York Airport at Night" (Nochnoi Aeroport v N'iu Iorke), the airport becomes a symbol of the oneness of matter and spirit:

A glass of cool blue
                    without the glass,
Beside the baroque fortresses of savings banks
As anti-material
                    as gas.[19]

(Stynet stakan sinevy -
                    bez stakana.
Riadom s kassami-teremami
On, tochno gaz,
                    antimaterialen !)

Like Ferlinghetti, Voznesensky at times displays a certain distrust of the word and its ability to express what Ferlinghetti would call "superreality" and what Voznesensky himself calls 'nastoiashchee', a word which combines the meanings of 'the present', 'the real', 'the genuine', 'the authentic', 'the essential'. In "Give Me Silence !" (Tishiny !), which was written in 1964 , under the impression of the 1963 campaign against the young writers with all its treacherous words spoken from pulpits and in corridors, Voznesensky celebrates an experience of life based on seeing, smelling and feeling, rather than hearing:

Sound is slower than light.
We open our mouths too often.
The real has no name.
Better to live by feeling and colour.

(Zvuk zapazdyvaet za svetom.
Slishkom chasto my rty pazevaem.
Nastoiashchee - nenazyvaemo.
Nado zhit' oshchushcheniem, tsvetom.)

The speaker has apparently fled the city in search of silence, and the poem ends with an idyllic scene of shepherds and dogs seated around a fire for their evening meal. Even the dogs are silent, and the impression of their tongues is visual: they glow like the flames of cigarette lighters (stanza 8).

In "Skrymtymnym" (Skrymtymnym), 1970, Voznesensky goes beyond language to name the unnameable. "Skrymtymnym" is the one essential word which must be understood : "Rome collapsed/ failing to understand the greeting 'Skrymtymnym'," (Rukhnul Rim/ ne poniav privetsviia: "Skrymtymnym") (stanza 6). Though nonsensical and untranslatable, "skrymtymnym" contains echoes of many ordinary words : 'you', 'we', 'dark', 'hidden', 'mother'. It is what makes poetry poetry (stanza 5) and human beings human, and it cannot be understood on a purely intellectual level:

> Skrymtymnym is the mother of languages.
> It is silly to trust reason, silly to argue with it.
> Prognosticating by computer
> we often don't reckon with skrymtymnym.
>
> (Skrymtymnym - iazykov pramater'.
> Glupo verit' razumu, glupo sporit' s nim.
> Plany prognoziruem po sopromatu,
> no chasto ne uchityvaem skrymtymnym.)

Because airports, planes, rocket launching pads, cyclotrons and the like appear frequently in his poetry, Voznesensky is sometimes portrayed as a futurist, an enthusiastic bard of modern technology. Remarks such as the following by Ozerov are commonplace in Soviet critical works on Voznesensky: "I cannot imagine this poet riding in a phaeton or a coach. No, much sooner do I see him in a jet plane..."[20] The poet himself rejects this image. The last lines of "New York Airport at Night" are a kind of reply to Maiakovsky, who celebrated Brooklyn Bridge as a technological wonder, a symbol of progress :" Brooklyn Bridge rearing its idiot stone cannot consort / With this monument of the era / The Airport"[21] (Bruklin - durak, tverdokamennyi chert. / Pamiatnik ery -/ Aeroport.)

What Voznesensky admires is not the sophisticated engineering of the airport, but its ability , as a work of art, to reveal spirit through matter. The task of any poet at any time, in Voznesensky's view, is to make the world real for his contemporaries, to "peel the skin from the planet" as he puts it in "The triangular Pear," that is, to reveal the spiritual reality of the world as it looks at any given time; it is therefore essential for him to let the contemporary world be the recognizable starting point of his poetry.

In "Nostalgia for the Present" (Nostalgiia po-nastoiashchemu), 1975, Voznesensky polemicizes against the portrait of himself as the eminently contemporary poet, playing again on the semantic ambiguity of the word 'nastoiashchee' (the present/ the authentic, real). The poem begins in a jocular tone :

I don't know about the rest of you,
but I feel the most painful
nostalgia, not for the past,
but for the present.

(Ia ne znaiu, kak ostal'nye'
no ia chuvstvuiu zhestochaishchuiu
ne po proshlomu nostalgiiu -
nostalgiiu po-nastoiashchemu)

Stanza 2 introduces religious imagery to describe the feeling of being separated from the present:

Like a novice who wants to approach the Lord,
but has access only to his superior,
I pray for immediate access
to the present

(Budto poslushnik khochet k Gospodu,
nu a dostup lish' k nastoiateliu -
tak ia umoliaiu dostupa
bez posrednikov k nastoiashchemy.)

Voznesensky here exploits the phonetic similarity between 'nastoiateliu' (superior) and 'nastoiashchemu' (the present), and the semantic ambiguity of 'nastoiashchemu'. Rhyming these two words and posing them as semantic opposites leaves open the possibility of understanding 'nastoiashchemu' not as 'the present', but as the adjective 'real'/'true', which would then describe 'Gospodu' (the Lord): "I pray for immediate access/ to the true Lord."

Stanzas 3-6 describe the consequences of being separated from the present/ the real: the feeling of separation from "the living earth" even as one lies down in a meadow (stanza 3); or from one's beloved even as one embraces her (stanza 4); or from one's 'real' friend, when he is insincere (stanza 5); the separation of the poet, shut up in his room, from the rest of the world (stanza 6). Thus, being separated from the present/ the real means being unable to coincide with the moment of one's experience of nature, love etc. In stanza 7 the religious imagery reemerges:

Everything is made of plastic, even the rags we wear,

I am sick of this sketchy life.
You and I won't be here in the future,
but the little church...

(Vse iz plastika - dazhe rubishcha,
nadoelo zhit' ocherkovo.
Nas s toboi ne bydet v budushchem,
a tserkovka...)

Here, the two meanings of 'nastoiashchee' are identified with each other through the correlation of two sets of opposites : plastic imitations are to genuine things what the future is to the present. The "little church" (tserkovka) is at the same time a symbol of eternity (it will be there when "you and I" are gone) and connected to the search, in stanza 2, for "immediate access to the present." "Tserkovka," then, identifies eternity with the moment, the present of true experience, and it is to this church that the speaker declares his faithfulness in the remaining three stanzas. In stanzas 9 and 10 'nastoiashchee' is contrasted not so much with 'past' (proshloe) and 'future' (budushchee) as with 'nastoiavsheesia' (the stale) and 'nastaiushchee' (that which is about to be, but is beyond the speaker's reach).

In an early poem such as "Fire in the Architectural Institute", there is an ecstatic, almost intoxicated sense of being alive which is related to young rebellious individualism and sensuality. In the later "Nostalgia for the Present", it is intimated, that the sense of being alive, of oneness with the present/ the authentic, is to be found in the experiences of love, nature and artistic creation. These three are all prominent themes in Voznesensky's poetry as they are in the work of Pasternak, whom Voznesensky calls "the only poet who influenced me."[22] In nature, with its cycle of decay and renewal, Pasternak saw the evidence of one spiritual force governing the universe and causing the eternal renewal of life. Man, according to Pasternak, is closest to this force when he is immersed in nature, love, or artistic creation. These themes have a similar function in Voznesensky's poetry; he shares Pasternak's cyclic world view and his feeling that somewhere on a spiritual level all things are interrelated, animated by the same force.

In "Nostalgia", as opposed to "Fire in the Architectural Institute", the search for 'nastoiashchee' is combined with an element of suffering, and this is the case in most of Voznesensky's poems, whether they are about love or about writing poetry. Suffering, in Voznesensky's poetry, is closely related to love and artistic creation and seems necessary to purify the experience of spiritual reality. It is as if it was necessary, as Pasternak wrote, that "A secret stream of suffering/ should relieve the cold of existence"

(Chtob tainaia struia stradaniia/ Sogrela kholod bytiia)[23]. N.A. Nilsson has characterized Pasternak's vision of life in terms of "Ecstasy and Sacrifice"[24], and these two are, I believe, also the mainstays of Voznesensky's poetic universe, different as it is from Pasternak's in texture and tonality. The 'enlightened' characters of this universe, the ones closest to the springs of life, are the ones who experience ecstasy and sacrifice most acutely, and they are usually women or artists/ poets. As Voznesensky's views on the poet's task will be discussed in chapter 4.3, I shall concentrate here on the role assigned to women in his poetry.

As poets produce poetry, women seem to produce love. Voznesensky nearly always portrays women as giving love unconditionally, asking nothing in return, and even those who sell love, like the prostitute in "The Last Train" (Posledniaia elektrichka), are redeemed by their ability to shed tears of compassion:

Yet it's you who are crying stormily
And shining with tears
Whisper to me obscenely
The purest words

And then from the train
Astounding everyone
You leap to the platform -
Purer than Beatrice.[25]

(Chego zhe ty plachesh' burno ?
I, vsia ot slez svetla,
Mne shepchesh' netsenzurno -
Chisteishie slova ?..

I vdrug iz elektrichki,
Oshelomiv vagon,
Ty
  chishche
          Beatriche
Sbegaesh' na perron.)

Loving makes these women vulnerable: they are always suffering, being tyrannized, abused, abandoned, beaten, or even beheaded. Yet, in their suffering, their strength is revealed; while they can not defend themselves against life's brutality, they can rise above it to create various kinds of miracles, like defying the laws of time or gravity or resuscitating life's "traffic victims:"

like a sister, no, a wife of mercy
she gives him her soul to the last drop
mouth to mouth

(ne sestroiu, a zhenoiu miloserdiia
dushu vsiu emu do donyshka daet -
rot v rot)[26]

Defenseless, but indestructible, suffering, but being reborn through suffering, woman, in Voznesensky's poetry, becomes a symbol of the divine aspect of man, the soul:

But her light is unfaltering
World - without - ending.
There are no religions,
                    no revelations.
There are women.[27]

(No chist ee vysokii svet,
otvazhnyi i bozhestvennyi.
Religii - net,
                znamenii - net.
Est'
    Zhenshchina!..)

As an embodiment of the divine principle, woman has a status similar to that of nature in Voznesensky's poetry. In "Someone is Beating a Woman" (B'iut zhenshchinu), nature seems to comfort the battered woman, reclaiming her from her tormenter:

She doesn't belong to him
Any more than a meadow deep in a wood.

And the stars? Rattling in the sky
Like raindrops against black glass,
Plunging down,
                they cool
Her grief-fevered forehead.[28]

(i ne emu prinadlezhala
kak proseka ili zvezda

i zvezdy po nebu stuchali
kak dozhd' o chernoe steklo
i skatyvaias'
                ostuzhali
ee goriachee chelo)

Carnivalistic down-grading is at work in "Wall of Death" (Motogonki po vertikal'noi stene), 1961. In this poem, the unlikely representative of divine femininity is a female wall-of-death driver, or, as Voznesensky says when introducing the poem at readings, a "Master of Sport of the Soviet Union."[29]

In the first two stanzas, the speaker perceives the heroine as something forceful and frightening, a threat to his life and to his sexuality. She is like a "horizontal torpedo" with cheeks like "craters" and the motorcycle like a "power saw" above her head; her legs in red leather pants are like "crab's claws," she has "wicked" red lips. Yet something about her contradicts this image : she is a torpedo, but with a chrysanthemum stuck in her belt, she is an amazon, but also an angel, although an "atomic angel" (angel atomnyi).

In the two middle stanzas, 3 and 4, the speaker begins to see what the heroine is about:

Living vertically is such a bore,
Darling barbarian, daughter of Icarus..
It's the plight
Only of vestal virgin and suburbanite
To live vertical and upright.

In this creature who soars
Over awnings, ovations, posters, and jeers
I can now see
　　　　the horizontal essence of woman
Float before me ![30]

(Nadoelo zhit' vertikal'no.
Akh, dikarochka, doch Ikara...
Obyvateli i vestalki
Vertikal'no, kak "van'ki-vstavan'ki.")

The essence of woman, then, is her ability to fly, to transform a motorcycle into a pair of wings and live death-defyingly, passionately, rising above convention, even physical laws. Passion, here, also has erotic connotations, as the phrase "the horizontal essense of woman" indicates.

In stanzas 5 and 6, the speaker's vision of the heroine has been transformed; he now sees weakness and vulnerability rather than forcefulness:

Oh how her orbit whirls her round the wall,

Her tears nailed to each eyeball;
And her trainer, Singichants'
Bullies her like Genghis Khan.

(Akh, kak kruzhit ee orbita !
Akh, kak slezy k belkam pribity !
I tiranit ee Chingiskhan -
treniruiushchii Singichants..)

The strength and the weakness of woman, according to this poem, are the same thing, her strength being her ability to surrender herself completely to the "orbit" of life. In stanzas 7-8, the speaker approaches the heroine in order to learn this ability from her, but finds that she is unable to put her secret into words, only her eyes express "such longing / for the horizontal !" (takoi/ gorizontal'noiu/ toskoi !)

In "The Skull Ballad" (Lobnaia Ballada), 1961, the feminine principle is represented by Anna Mons, the mistress of Peter the Great. Anna is being executed as a spying foreigner, an event that never actually took place. In the description of the tsar, the symbol of worldly power, the image of the motorcycle reappears :"His eyes slide over his face/ like a skidding motorbike"[31] (Po litsu pronosiatsia ochi/ kak buksiruiushchii mototsikl). The image suggests that, rather than being in control, the tsar is inhabited by a blind force which knows no purpose other than its own fulfillment, and this is confirmed by the outcome of the events that take place in the poem. As Peter holds up Anna's severed head for the crowd to see, the head speaks to him:

love is so small who cares for love
in times like these men build
and set a world on fire - you kiss
me State in blood in blood

what if you reek of borscht and peas
such passion has a flavour
Progress you drive me mad for you
I want you to rule forever"

(v dni stroitel'stva i pozhara
do maliusen'koi li liubvi ?

ty tseluesh' menia Derzhava
tvoi gubi v moei krovi
peregarom borshchom gorokhom
pakhnet shchedryi tvoi potselui
kak ty liubish' menia Epokha
obozhaiu tebia
tsarui !..")

Instead of triumphing, the tsar seems to have defeated himself, his destructive power is turned inwards, and his eyes now express such fierce melancholy that "A witness from abroad jerked back/ Like a spike rammed to its head" (chto prisel zagranichnyi gost'/ budto vbityi po shliapke gvozd').

The spectrum of possible interpretations of this poem is wide. The use of such terms as 'stroitel'stvo' (construction) and 'epokha' (era), both typical of Soviet socialist rhetoric, suggests that the "State" (Derzhava) in this poem can be identified with the Soviet state, in which case the poem can be understood in terms of the relationship between the socialist state and the individual, or between the state and the poet. Then there is the opposition of Russianness vs. non-Russianness which is clearly at work in the poem, and which brings to mind the concept of the Russian soul with its inner contradictions centered in the character of Peter the Great. In any case, the poem is about power and its opposite, the opposite being portrayed as something feminine, something which cannot be possessed or destroyed by power, be it love, poetry, or the soul.

In "Fire in the Architectural Institute", life was envisaged as moving on, from one site to the next, but in "Autumn in Sigulda" (Osen' v Sigulde), 1961, the poet seems to be looking back rather than ahead. Leaving his cabin after the summer, watching the onset of autumn in nature around him, he realizes that life consists of leaving, leaving mothers, places, friends, women (stanzas 1-7). He is not about to oppose himself to this order; in the second half of the poem, the refrain "Thank you" (Spasibo) has replaced "Good-bye" (Proshchaite), as the poet gives thanks for what life has given him. The line "Thank you, Life, for having been" (Spasibo, zhizn', chto byla) occurs around the middle of the poem, at the end of stanza 7, but by stanza 10, "you" seems to refer to a woman. The poet is contrasting the possible immortality of poetic achievement with the sense of being alive which this woman gave him:

> —Voznesensky may one day be graven
> In cold stone, but, meanwhile, may
> I find haven
> On your warm cheek as Andrei. [32]
>
> ("Andrei Voznesenskii" - budet,
> pobyt' ne slovom, ne bul'dikom,
> eshche na shcheke tvoei dushnoi -
> "Andriushkoi")

The love affair in question is described in stanzas 11-14, from the beginning to the inevitable end. In stanzas 15-16, the poet seems completely reconciled to the laws of human life which coincide with the laws of nature:

I know that we shall live again as
Friends or girl friends or blades of grass,
Instead of us this one or that will come:
Nature abhors a vacuum.

The leaves are swept away without a trace,
But millions more will grow in their place:
Thank you, Nature, for the laws you gave me.

(Ia znaiu chto my povtorimsia
v druz'iakh i podrugakh, v travinkakh,
nas etot zamenit i tot, -
priroda boitsia pustot,

spasibo za sdutye krony
na smenu pridut milliony,
za vashi zakony - spasibo,)

But then, in the last three lines of the poem, this resigned attitude is unmasked as death-oriented: to see life as leaving is to see it as dying. The anguish which has so far been suppressed is voiced now, as "spasibo" (Thank you) turns into "Spasite !" (Save me !) (the literal meaning of 'spasibo' is 'God save'):

But a woman runs down the track
Like a red autumn leaf at the train's back.

Save me !

(no zhenshchina mchitsia po sklonam,
kak ognennyi list za vagonom...

Spasite !

In this poem, again, woman is life-oriented, while man is death-oriented; reinterpreting life as loving rather than leaving/ dying, she rebels against time. Leaves fall, then wither away, and so do humans, but as they do it, they "burn". The "fiery leaf," which is the literal translation of "ognennyi list" rendered by Auden as "red autumn leaf", is an image of passion, not death.

The image of men travelling in railway cars and women trying to catch up, also occurs in "You Sit, Pregnant and Pale" (Sidish', beremennaia, blednaia),1958: "How you stumbled along the tracks,/ staring at window streaks" (kak ty bezhala za vagonom,/ gliadela v polosy okonnye). In this poem, the "male" view of life as rushing along a straight line is, moreover, contrasted with the growth and roundness of the "female" attitude, symbolized by pregnancy:

Women like monoliths stand,
Showing their bellies to the moon

While the great-bellied earth,
Trapped in the bleak enormity of space

As it spins to the light,
Interprets them.[30]

(Stoiat, kak kamennye, baby,
lune podstaviv zhivoty.

I povorachivaias' k svetu
v nochnom bytu neobzhytom -

kak ponimaet ikh planeta
svoim ogromnym zhivotom..)

4.2.3. Allen Ginsberg: "it was like a great *un* conscious that was running between all of us."

Ginsberg's original intention as a poet, like Voznesensky's, was to rehabilitate subjective experience as a value, the only detectable, authentic value in the world as he saw it. His early poems record an expedition to the far corners of the experiencing consciousness, undertaken in accordance with Blake's dictum about the road of excess that leads to the palace of wisdom. Ginsberg never leaves any doubt that, to him, the journey within is 'holy', because it is also the journey to God and through God to a new community with one's fellow men in spite of the alienating forces embodied in society.

The 1949 poem "Paterson" is like an embryonic version of "Howl". In the first part of the poem, the speaker declares his refusal to take part in society, seeing that the stake is too high (conforming) and the reward too unalluring ("the dead prick of commonplace/ obsession") :

How much can I make by cutting my hair ? If I put new heels on my shoes,

bathe my body reeking of masturbation and sweat, layer upon layer of
excrement
dried in employment bureaus, magazine hallways, statistical cubicles, factory
stairways,[34]

In the second part, the speaker vows to break out of "these rooms papered with visions of money," opting for a life on the road, the road that goes all over the United States and down to Mexico in search of authentic experience :

I would rather go mad, gone down the dark road to Mexico, heroin dripping
in my veins,
eyes and ears full of marihuana,
eating the god Peyote on the floor of a mudhut on the border
or laying in a hotel room over the body of some suffering man or woman

This life of sacrifice and ecstasy is presented as an emulation of the life of Christ :

crowned with thorns in Galveston, nailed hand and foot in Los
Angeles, raised up to die in Denver,
pierced in the side in Chicago, perished and tombed in New Orleans and
resurrected in 1958 somewhere on Garret Mountain,
come down roaring in a blaze of hot cars and garbage,

This section takes off on the confession of faith as said in the Christian church, and the whole second part of the poem is indeed the speaker's creed, listing such objects of belief as madness, drugs, the road, sex. This, then, is the way to communicate with God, "screaming and dancing in praise of Eternity annihilating the sidewalk, an-/ nihilating reality." In the last line of the poem, "leaving my flesh and my bones/ hanging on the trees," the image of Christ seems to merge with the image of Dionysos who was, according to William Everson, in certain cults worshipped as "the god whose dismembered body rose each spring to redeem the people from the ravages of winter."[35]

Ginsberg's visions of William Blake had convinced him that his suffering existence up to that moment of loneliness and "dead-end" living in Harlem 1948 had had a purpose beyond his own designs:

> I suddenly realized that *this* existence was *it* ! And (...) that this was the experience that I was born for. This initiation. Or this vision or this consciousness of being alive unto myself, alive myself unto the Creator. As the

> son of the Creator - who loved me, I realized, or who responded to my desire, say.[36]

He now believed that the purpose of "all high poetry" was to reveal the "spirit of the universe" : " I mean that's the way I began seeing poetry as the communication of the particular experience - not just any experience but *this* experience."[37]

In the Paris Review interview, Ginsberg manages to bring across his experience of cosmic consciousness quite clearly, trying, as he says, to "avoid generalizations" and to "keep to images:"

> What I was speaking about visually was, immediately, that the cornices in the old tenement building in Harlem across the back-yard court had been carved very finely in 1890 or 1910. And were like the solidification of a great deal of intelligence and care and love also. So that I began noticing in every corner where I looked evidence of a living hand, even in the bricks, in the arrangement of each brick. Some hand placed them there - that some hand had placed the whole universe in front of me. That some hand had placed the sky. No, that's exaggerating - not that some hand had placed the sky but that the sky was the living blue hand itself. Or that God was in front of my eyes - existence itself was God.[38]

Yet the poems dealing directly with the Blake experience (for instance "Vision," 1948, or "Psalm IV," 1960) or with deliberate, drug-induced attempts to repeat the experience (many of these poems are named after the drug used, see for instance "Lysergic Acid," 1959) are unconvincing, suffering from the same flaws as "Paterson." What "Paterson" does convey is a feeling of anger and despair so powerful that it leaves no room for any attempt to convey a real sense of the town Paterson or the person Ginsberg. The claim that the hero's beatness , like the suffering of Christ, will lead to beatitude remains an unwarranted postulate.

Among the pre-"Howl" poems, the ones dealing with sexual love seem most successful in conveying a sense of timeless spiritual reality. This is paradoxical since the young Ginsberg was far from being at ease with his own homosexuality, as the 1947 poem "In Society" shows. The scene here is a cocktail party where the speaker first refuses to join in the "queertalk" of some homosexual guests, then has a confrontation with a female guest, who refuses to be introduced to him. During the evening, he eats a sandwich : "an/ enormous sandwich of human flesh,/ I noticed, while I was chewing on it,/ it also included a dirty asshole." "The Green Automobile," 1953, and "Love Poem on Theme by Whitman," 1954, both declare themselves to be fantasies, the products of painful longing rather than actual experience, and yet, in both poems, the vision of love as restored innocence and oneness is rendered concretely and personally enough to be credible.

"The Green Automobile", with its thirty four four-line stanzas and its variations of the refrain "We will go riding", surprisingly sounds rather like a courtly love ballad. The green automobile functions like the white horse in a fairy-tale, transporting the speaker to the magic realm of love. As the poem's central metaphor, the green automobile is a fortunate choice, being, as P. Christensen points out, "a synthesis of pastoral and industrial symbols."[39] It is also an obvious choice, since the poem's hero, Neal Cassady, was unimaginable without a car, and since the car had already been elevated to the metaphorical level in Kerouac's accounts of his and Cassady's adventures on the road. In this poem, as in Kerouac's *On the Road*, the car becomes the spatial representation of the *moment*, the eternal "present" of experience : "So this Green Automobile/ I give you in flight, / a present, a present/ from my imagination" (stanza 31).

The poem opens with the hypothetical "If I had a green automobile", and for the first eight stanzas, the verbs are consequently in the subjunctive mood : "I'd go find my old companion" etc. Then, in stanzas 9-13, the speaker seems to realize that he does indeed have a "Green Automobile", namely the real love which he feels and which enables his imagination to travel with the beloved. Appropriately, there is a shift to the present tense indicative:

> for we can see together
> the beauty of souls
> hidden like diamonds
> in the clock of the world,
>
> like Chinese magicians can
> confound the immortals
> with our intellectuality
> hidden in the mist
>
> in the Green Automobile
> which I have invented
> imagined and visioned
> on the roads of the world
>
> more real than the engine
> on a track in the desert
> purer than greyhound and
> swifter than physical jetplane

From stanza 14 on, the imaginary journey is described in the future tense, as something that is certain to happen, and from stanza 18 on, in the present tense, as something that is happening. Then, in stanzas 24-30, the journey is viewed from the point of view of Eternity ("While all the time in Eternity"), Eternity as experienced in the moment of love. Love is presented as a heroic act which defeats time and saves the world:

> Neal, we'll be real heroes now
> in a war between our cocks and time
> let's be the angels of the world's desire
> and take the world to bed with us before we die

The final three stanzas describe the end of the journey, as the lovers return to their separate daily lives. The two levels of existence are contrasted, but not in such a way as to deny the reality of one of them, they coexist, connected by the green automobile: "we'll go riding/ all night long until dawn,// then back to your railroad, the SP/ your house and your children."

Neal Cassady is portrayed here, and in many other poems, as a "sexual angel" (stanza 24); it is his uninhibited sexuality, viewed as natural generosity, that makes him an innocent, an "angel". Sex and innocence are also linked in "Love Poem on Theme by Whitman." The inspiration for the poem is Whitman's "The Sleepers" and perhaps, as Tytell suggests,[40] Ginsberg's relationship with Neal and Carolyn Cassady. While the reality of that relationship was the rivalry of Carolyn Cassady and Allen Ginsberg for Neal Cassady's attention, the poem is a search for a deeper level of togetherness beyond guilt and discord. The poem's speaker tells of lying down between a "bridegroom" and a "bride", described as "bodies fallen from heaven." During the love-making that follows, the boundaries between individual bodies become blurred, and the concept of guilt is rendered meaningless by the surge of passion and compassion:

> bodies locked shuddering naked, hot hips and buttocks screwed into each
> other
> and eyes, eyes glinting and charming, widening into looks and abandon,
> and moans of movement, voices, hands in air, hands between thighs,
> hands in moisture on softened hips, throbbing contraction of bellies
> till the white come flow in the swirling sheets,
> and the bride cry for forgiveness and the groom be covered with tears of
> passion and compassion

Sex, then, is a means of uniting souls as well as bodies, and from the point of view of the individual personality, sex is an agent of wholeness ("I rise up from the bed replenished"), or, in Jungian terms, a way of integrating unconscious psychic contents into the personality : this all takes place "before the mind wakes."

In the Paris Review interview Ginsberg makes it clear that, to him, the experience of God is also the experience of total contact or community with other human beings. Asked whether he has had other experiences of the same order as the Blake visions, he tells of a situation in a bookstore, where he was browsing and watching the other customers and the clerks when he suddenly realized that:

> They all had the consciousness, it was like a great *un*- conscious that was running between all of us, that everybody *was* completely conscious, but that the fixed expressions that people have, the habitual expressions, the manners, the mode of talk, are all hiding this consciousness. Because almost at that same moment it seemed that it would be too terrible if we communicated to each other on a level of total consciousness and awareness each of the other - like it would be too terrible, it would be the end of civ... not civilization, but , in other words, the position that evrybody was in was *ridiculous* , everybody running around peddling books to each other. Here in the universe ![41]

"Sunflower Sutra", 1955, celebrates the community of souls in general, and the companionship between Ginsberg and Kerouac in particular : "Jack Kerouac sat beside me on a busted rusty iron pole, companion, we/ thought the same thoughts of the soul, bleak and blue and sad-eyed.." In the poem, it is Kerouac who points out the sunflower, seemingly so displaced among the industrial junk of a San Francisco railroad dock. The dead flower moves Ginsberg to an outburst of recognition and compassion:

> corolla of bleary spikes pushed down and broken like a battered crown, seeds
> fallen out of its face, soon-to-be-toothless mouth of sunny air,sunrays
> obliterated on its hairy head like a dried wire spiderweb,
> leaves stuck out like arms out of the stem, gestures from the sawdust root,
> broke pieces of plaster fallen out of the black twigs, a dead fly in its
> ear
> Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O my soul, I loved you
> then !

Writing the poem is a Whitmanesque gesture on Ginsberg's part, directing his feelings of "self-acceptance in modern terms"[42] towards his fellow men :

> So I grabbed up the skeleton thick flower and stuck it at my side like a
> scepter,

and deliver my sermon to my soul, and Jack's soul too, and anyone who'll
listen,
- We're not our skin of grime, we're not our dread bleak dusty imageless
locomotive, we're all golden sunflowers inside, blessed by our own
seed & hairy naked accomplishment-bodies graying into mad black
formal sunflowers in the sunset, spied on by our eyes under the
shadow of the mad locomotive riverbank sunset Frisco hilly tincan
evening sitdown vision.

Before finally realizing his long-planned move to San Francisco, Ginsberg undertook his first long voyage abroad, outside his own culture, spending four months in Mexico in 1954. This trip, which was to be followed by countless journeys around the world, is represented, in "Siesta in Xbalba and Return to the States", 1954-55, in terms of a religious pilgrimage, or a trip to the underworld, returning with knowledge. Ginsberg himself, in a 1956 letter to his former teacher Mark van Doren, described the poem as "rather romantic in mood."[43]

The first four stanzas introduce Mexico in terms of two forces that influence the speaker, on the one hand the ruins of ancient cities as inscriptions of time :" invisible words unscrawled,/ impossible syntax of apocalypse - / Uxmal: Noble Ruins/ No construction -," and on the other hand nature as an obtrusive presence, a feeling of "eyes watching me." The pressure of these two forces create a mood of "siesta", an urge to sink into a vegetative state and "let the mind fall down:"

- One could pass valuable months
and years perhaps a lifetime
doing nothing but lying in a hammock
reading prose with the white doves
copulating underneath
and monkeys barking in the interior
of the mountain
and I have succumbed to this
temptation -

Stanzas 5-13 give the mental situation of the speaker in the Mexican setting. His New York past has crystallized into " an eternal kodachrome/ souvenir of a gathering/ of souls at a party", and, having exhausted himself in the search for meaning ("blinking singleminded/ at a bleak idea"), he is suddenly able to look at himself too as if from a distance:

As I leaned against a tree
inside the forest

expiring of self-begotten love,
I looked up at the stars absently,
as if looking for
something else in the blue night
through the boughs,
and for a moment saw myself
leaning against a tree

Finally, the speaker starts looking around him. Nature seems absurd and threatening, but there is a sense of meaning about to be revealed:

palms with lethargic feelers
rattling in presage of rain
shifting their fronds
in the direction of the balmy wind,
monstrous animals
sprayed up out of the ground
settling and unsettling
as in water...
and later in the night
a moment of premonition
when the plenilunar cloud-filled sky
is still and small

At this point, the poem starts over, stanza 14 restating the location of the speaker "with drug and hammock/ at Chichén Itzá on the Castle." This time, the chain of thought starts with Mexico as the embodiment of the past, then moves to the future. The speaker sits in "skully meditation" in front of a "dethshead/ half a thousand years old," until he is interrupted, "scared" by animal sounds from the forest, "some sort of weird birdsong/ or reptile croak." Then the speaker's thoughts move to the ancient Mexican cities, Uxmal, Tulum etc., all "sunken under the flood of years," as he meditates on time as the limit to thought:

Time's slow wall overtopping
all that firmament of mind,
as if a shining waterfall of leaves and rain
were built down solid from the endless sky
through which no thought can pass

This meditation is again interrupted by an animal sound, which is also the sound of time: "A great red fat rooster (...) screams."

Up until this point, the poem's emphasis has been on existence as a text made unintelligible by time ("invisible words unscrawled," "impossible syntax of apocalypse," "entablatures of illegible scripture," "headdresses of indecipherable intellect," "alien hieroglyphs of Eternity") and on nature as a call to refrain from even trying to read this text. But in stanzas 24-30 a change is taking place, the siesta seems to be over, and the speaker concentrates on what he has, after all, been able to 'read': "I alone know the great crystal door/ to the House of Night," "I found the face of one/ of the Nine Guardians of the Night" etc. In actual fact, Ginsberg's experiences, which are recorded here, were rather extraordinary. He led one expedition of Indians to a mountain in the jungle to investigate reports of volcanic eruptions, and, having thus established himself as a man of courage, he was asked to lead another expedition in search of a legendary cave, which they found.

By stanza 28, the speaker has chosen to get up from his hammock and return to an active life, to find out more, his findings having woken him to "nostalgia" for "the classic stations/ of the earth," "the few years of memory left/ before the ultimate night of war," and "the few actual/ ecstatic conscious souls/ certain to be found / familiars..." In stanzas 31-35, the speaker anticipates a journey to the old world, which is also conceived of as the journey of a life. The first part of the poem ends with the revelation anticipated in stanza 13, following a recollection of the Blake visions:

> There is a God
> dying in America
> already created
> in the imagination of men
> made palpable
> for adoration
> there is an inner
> anterior image
> of divinity
> beckoning me out
> to pilgrimage.
>
> O future, unimaginable God.

The double ambiguity of anterior/ future and inner/out suggests that the speaker's discovery is to be understood on two levels - like Voznesensky's discovery of "America in myself/ myself in America." He has discovered in Mexico the roots of American culture, a new point of view from which to see his own America, and he has discovered a 'Mexico' in himself, something which connects him with the rest of humanity and with eternity, coming close to the Jungian concept of a collective unconscious. The two threads are tied together in the account of the speaker's "Return to the States" which constitutes the second part of the poem.

On his way north, the speaker visits the catacombs at Guanajuato, seeing the mummies as "burning screaming lawyers" and concluding that "The problem is isolation/ - there in the grave/ or here in the oblivion of light"(stanza 9): In direct contrast to this is the scene involving two loving couples observed by the speaker through a keyhole : "What joy ! The Nakedness !/ They dance !" "Isolation" is now modified to "solitude:" "What solitude I've/ finally inherited" (stanza 13). The situation of the speaker spying on the lovers is the reversal of previous situations in which the jungle seemed to be spying on the speaker, and as such suggests his reconciliation with nature, including his own nature. After a faintly symbolical bath -- "days on the Pacific/ where I bathed" -- he reaches the U.S. border as if reborn, having assumed a Whitman-like persona. (In the letter to Mark Van Doren qouted above, Ginsberg mentions Whitman as a discovery as important as Mexico : "and besides Whitman is a vast mountain, so big I never saw him before."[44]) Across the border, he is now able to see the monster later to be named Moloch : "The nation over the border/ grinds its arms and dreams/ of war: I see/ the fiery blue clash..."

"Kaddish for Naomi Ginsberg 1894-1956"[45], which appeared in 1959, is Ginsberg's most daring attempt at fusing the confessional and visionary modes, in a Dionysian celebration of the unity of extreme human suffering with absolute divinity. The subject of his mother's mental illness, being the main source of his own suffering, was as difficult as it was crucial for Ginsberg to approach, and the composition of the poem was a painful process spanning a period of several years as described in "How Kaddish Happened."[46] The result is not harmonious nor meant to be. In the very last line of the poem, the cries of crows, signifying death and decomposition, alternate with invocations of God : "Lord Lord Lord caw caw caw Lord Lord Lord caw caw caw/ Lord." The conflicts in Naomi's life, symbolized by all the wounds and scars on her tormented body, are not removed by the proclamation of an absolute divinity, but there seems to be an expectation in the poem that the louder the howl of human pain, the louder will be the echo from Heaven. Lines such as "Triumph,/ to have been there, and changed, like a tree, broken" or "No flower like that flower which knew itself in the garden, and/ fought the knife -- lost" (p 10) suggest the idea that life and death give meaning to each other.

The Jewish "Mourner's Kaddish" combines sanctification of the dead with praise of God, and Ginsberg's "Kaddish" can be divided into two parts along similar lines. The long "Narrative" (part II) is a "release of particulars" (p 13), Ginsberg's detailed recollections of his mother's life and his feelings for her ranging from repudiation to identification. In the remaining, shorter sections, "Proem" (I), "Hymmn," "Lament" (III), "Litany" (IV), and "Fugue" (V), the poet is searching for and proclaiming a unity on a higher level, a spiritual transcendence, that would reconcile his own conflicting feelings about his mother and about life. Such a division is not totally valid. "Proem," for instance, is like a compressed version of the whole poem; after finishing it, Ginsberg realized that he had not "told the whole secret family-self tale -- my own one-and-only child-youth memories," [47] which is what he attempts in "Narrative."

In "Narrative", Naomi's illness is described as a combination of extreme paranoia and "mad idealisms," which produces a kind of double vision : she sees either horror or beauty (cf. her two kinds of paintings, p 25-26), never the mixture which is reality, and never her son Allen. She serves Allen a nauseating meal, while telling him how she met God and cooked him a nice Jewish meal (p 23). She is in a world of her own "-- the gamut of hallucinations -- for real --her own/ universe -- no road that goes elsewhere," (p 27) and no amount of "banging against her head" or denying her visions on her son's part will break down the barrier between him and her.

Again, "The problem is isolation," and in this sense one can agree with T. Merill's assertion that Naomi is "The Archetype of modern man" [48] keeping in mind that she is much more than that and stopping short of calling her madness a "metaphor" as Merill does. The isolation of both Naomi and Allen culminates in his last visit to her in hospital; she, herself aged almost beyond recognition, does not recognize him.

Communication between them takes place when they are not physically together. Towards the end of "Narrative" there is a passage eulogizing the "lost Naomi" whom Allen knows mainly from a photograph of her in youth with mandolin on her knees and flowers in her hair. Here, there is almost total identification with Naomi and with her 'vision'. She is called "woman," "holy mother," "blessed daughter," and "glorious muse that bore me from the womb, gave suck/ first mystic life & taught me talk and music, from whose pained / head I first took Vision."(p 29) Finally, a few days after her death, Allen receives a letter from Naomi:

> Strange prophecies anew ! She wrote -- 'The key is in the window, the
> key is in the sunlight at the window -- I have the key -- Get married Allen
> don't take drugs -- the key is in the bars, in the sunlight in the window.(p 31)

The letter, itself strangely dualistic, is the main point of intersection between "Narrative" and the other parts of the poem.

In "Lament" (part III), the key is defined as the key to the locked room of the self, the end of separation, the end of the "nightmare" of "divided creation." Opening the door of the self (the hospital room), you look back and see "Creation glistening backwards to the same grave, size of universe,/ size of the tick of the hospital's clock."(p 33) The key in the sunlight at the window is left "to the living,"(p 33) and yet the key is death, God is death the great unifier. Death reduces physical existence, the "accumulations of life that wear us out," (p 11) to a dream : "caw caw all my years my birth a dream caw caw New York the bus/ the broken shoe the vast highschool caw caw all Visions / of the Lord."("Fugue", p 36) In this perspective, all human suffering has the same purpose : "Blessed be He in homosexuality ! Blessed be He in Paranoia ! (...)/ Blessed be He who leads all sorrow to Heaven."("Hymmn", p 32)

The God evoked in "Kaddish" is a father figure, and yet he seems to be created in the image of Naomi herself, that "fatal mama." (p 27) He is longed for, yet frightening and incomprehensible: "Lord Lord great Eye that stares on all and moves in a black/ cloud." (p 36) This near identification of God with Naomi reveals an unresolved conflict in the poem. The poet's longed for union with his mother can only take place after her death, and this leads him to hail death or death-consciousness as the only remedy for separation in life in general. But the worship of death is strangely at odds with the poem's central strategy which is, in fact, to resurrect Naomi as a unique individual, by reliving her ordeal in complete empathy bringing out the heroic qualities of her suffering. It is interesting in this connection to consider Ginsberg's own remarks in "How 'Kaddish' Happened" (1966):

> In the midst of the broken consciousness of mid twentieth-century suffering anguish of separation from my own body and its natural infinity of feeling its own self one with all self, I instinctively seeking to reconstitute that blissful union which I experienced so rarely I took it to be supernatural and gave it holy Name thus made hymn laments of longing and litanies of triumphancy of Self over mind-illusion mechano-universe of un-feeling Time in which I saw my self my own mother my very nation trapped desolate our worlds of consciousness homeless and at war except for the original trembling of bliss in breast and belly of every body that nakedness rejected in suits of fear that familiar defenseless living hurt self which is myself same as all others abandoned scared to our own unchanging desire for each other.[49]

In "Hymmn", the poet exclaims: "Blessed be He who builds Heaven in Darkness ! Blessed Blessed/ Blessed be He ! Blessed be He ! Blessed be Death on/ us All." (p 32) These lines remain resoundingly abstract and in stark contrast to "Litany" which blesses and caresses Naomi, cataloguing and taking leave of various parts of her body related to incidents in "Narrative", gradually concentrating on her eyes, that is, her 'vision' and finally suggesting that in death she is whole:

> with your eyes being led away by policemen to an ambulance
> with your eyes strapped down on the operating table
> with your eyes with the pancreas removed
> with your eyes of appendix operation
> with your eyes of abortion
> with your eyes of ovaries removed
> with your eyes of shock
> with your eyes of lobotomy
> with your eyes of divorce
> with your eyes of stroke
> with your eyes alone
> with your eyes
> with your eyes
> with your death full of Flowers.

In "Kaddish" Ginsberg manages, as Harvey Shapiro puts it, "to cut through and summon the dead, to recreate his insane mother, to make his peace with her, more than that to make a muse of her - the most bizarre muse in English Lit.."[50] This is an act of love which does break out of separation, being the "Work of the merciful Lord of Poetry" (p 31) rather than of the "Father in death." (p11).

4.2.4. Bella Akhmadulina: "Fever, I am all yours !"

Akhmadulina is the least topical of the New Wave poets. As Evtushenko writes:

> The oratorical intrusions into life peculiar to me at some periods, or the explosiveness of the monologues of Voznesensky, who also appeared at that time, were alien to her very nature.Bella was looking for her own path to the age, or maybe the age was looking for its own path to her.
> And this path of connecting her personal pulse to the age lay through her inner suffering, which life, despite her apparent well-being, did not grudge her .... She did not become a publicist - this was completely outside her talent, but her own nerves, by now independent of herself, became the nerves of the age, and in her apparently most intimate poems, behind the snow, the twilight, the lights, and the swaying of branches, glared the terrible face of our epoch.[51]

Akhmadulina did not become a publicist, indeed, she has worked hard to build her own poetic universe, making it as firm and as different from everyday life as possible. Her diction and vocabulary are often deliberately archaic,[52] and on the stylistic level she shuns all the 'special effects' and trendy experiments for which she chides Voznesensky in "My Comrades" (Moi tovarishchi), 1963. There are hardly any abstracts in her verse, but among the objects, phenomena or sensations, a few "timeless" ones are very frequent: the candle, the notebook, the glass vase, colours (especially white and orange), music, the flute, the seasons, the elements (air, fire, water, rain, snow), the times of day, fever, chill, shivering, sleeping, crying etc. All the physical data are ultimately referable to her own inner life, in which she finds evidence of a different, truer reality. Revealing this alternative reality in an age of scientific materialism is a matter of life and death to Akhmadulina; her attempt to resurrect the second dimension is her link with the age. If her primary subjects, then, are her own inner world, her own sensitivity, and her own poetry, it is because they, to her, represent her only path to spiritual reality; and the implications are the same when she deals with such ephemeral phenomena as motorbikes, vending machines, or airplanes, all of which were, in the official Soviet consciousness at the time of writing, symbols of technological progress, the fruits of 'ripe socialism'.

In "Little Airplanes" (Malen'kie samolety), 1963[53], the poet speaks of a recurring dream : little airplanes keep coming to her, resembling baby birds, little fishes, crickets, insects swarming around her fire, children climbing onto her knee, dogs. They seem to be connected with all the natural elements of human existence (the air, the earth, water, fire), and they come to her to be fed, protected, played with, caressed, in short, to be loved. In the second half of the poem, the poet goes to the airport to hear "the mighty roar / that accompanies the times" (ogromnye te gromy/ ozvuchivshie vremena), and to ride in a real airplane. She insists that she has "sobered up" (otrezvev) from the dream, yet the feeling of the dream is still with her as she addresses the real airplane:

> With that mighty, shiny shell of yours
> you've fooled everyone down here, but really
> you're a tiny tot, a child, and nearly
> invisible up there against the blue.
>
> (Ty sdezs' ogromnym serebrom
> vsekh obmanul - na samom dele
> ty - kroshka, ty-ditia, ty - ele
> zameten tam, na golubom.) (stanza 10)

Finally, the poet identifies the real plane with the dream planes, praying that when she leaves it, her dream will keep it safe : "then let my strange and kindly dream/ protect you, oh, my little plane !" (puskai moi dobryi, strannyi son/ khranit tebia, o samoletik !) The real airplane is reduced -- or exalted -- to another dream. One can ride it, but it too is subject to the basic conditions of human existence, that is, it depends for its success on the qualities of the human spirit.

The "Vending Machine" (Avtomat s gazirovannoi vodoi), in the 1961 poem of that name, is Akhmadulina's version of Ferlinghetti's "fountains of imagination." In this poem, the act of getting a drink of fruit-flavoured soda water from a vending machine turns into a symbol of the immediate, totally gratifying, and therefore "miraculous" experience. Typically, the subject of this experience is a child, "a mysterious, contemporary child" (tainstvennyi rebenok sovremennyi) who is "an initiate in miracles" (prichastnyi k chudesam):

And next with fantastical confidence,
he drops his clammy coin into the slot
and, bathing his cheek in the gentle spray,
catches the pink fountain with his glass

(Zatem samonadeiannyi fantast
monetu vlazhnuiu on opuskaet v shchelku
i nezhnym bryzgam podstavliaia shcheky
stakanom lovit rozovyi fontan) (stanza 2)

Having watched the boy, the poet tries to repeat his miracle, and she is successful:

All the rainbows rising from there
pierce the palate in sweetness brief
and already the tongue, tender from the tickling,
delights in the spectrum of seven tastes

(Vse radugi voznikshie iz nikh
pronzaet nebo v sladosti korotkoi,
o vot uzhe, paznezhennyi shchekotkoi
sem' vkusov probuet iazyk) (stanza 7)

The image of the rainbow or the full spectrum of colours is one of Akhmadulina's favorite symbols of wholeness.[54] The experience described is obviously a sensual one, but there is also the implication that childish trust in life is rewarded with a miracle from Heaven, a rainbow in a glass. (This aspect is underlined by the fact that the Russian word for 'palate', 'nebo', also means 'sky', although the pronunciation is different.) By the last stanza, the vending machine is transformed into a symbol of universal kindness, a 'timeless' peasant woman pouring a wanderer a drink of cold water.

In Akhmadulina's poetic universe, the child (she generally prefers the archaic term 'ditia' to 'rebenok') is the enlightened character above all others. The child represents the ideal state of mind, being innocent, trustful, independent and at home in the world. Dogs, too, appear in many poems (see for instance "On Peschanaia Street" (Zhivut na ulitse Peschanoi), 1961, "How long since I" (Kak dolgo ia ne), 1967, etc.), and when they do, they are invariably perceived by the poet as kindred souls, in their devotion to love, their inability to pretend, and their vulnerability.

Like Voznesensky, Akhmadulina often juxtaposes the masculine and the feminine psyche in her poetry, and, surprisingly, she seems to interpret the essence of woman in much the same way as Voznesensky, that is, in terms of ecstasy and sacrifice. Woman, in her ability to surrender herself completely to love, is more directly linked with life than man, as we see it in the 1961 poem "Laughing, wondering, rebelling" (Smeias', likuia, buntuia) about a woman swimming naked in the sea. Woman's 'nakedness' brings her not only ecstasy, but also suffering. In "I Was Living Joyfully and Swiftly" (Zhilos' mne veselo i shibko), 1959, a girl dares her lover to walk across a tree trunk bridging a river. She goes first herself, but he refuses, and, when they part on the train station after their outing, she knows he will not return:

> But you walk down the platform,
> your face hidden behind your collar,
> and the cigarette glowing in the snow
> is crushed under your heel.
>
> (A ty prokhodish po perronu
> zakryv litso vorotnikom,
> i tleiushchuiu papirosu
> v snegu konchaesh' kablukom) (stanza 6)

Women wounded in love are the subject of a great many poems, for instance "Fifteen Boys" (Piatnadtsat' mal'chikov), 1959, and "Volcanoes" (Vulkany), 1960. With the experience of betrayal, 'feminine' receptiveness towards life becomes a conscious choice, what Ginsberg would call a heroic stance, and this, according to

Akhmadulina, is the fate of women in love as well as of artists.

The theme of comradeship between artists is very prominent in Akhmadulina's work, for instance in such poems as "For Years Now Down My Street" (Po ulitse moei kotoryi god), 1962, "To Simon Chikovani" (Simonu Chikovani), 1965, "I Am Thinking How Stupid I Was " (Ia dumaiu kak ia byla glupa), 1967, or "Visiting an Artist" (Gostit' u khudozhnika), 1968, and it is clear that what unites all artists is their suffering. Thus, in "My Comrades," Akhmadulina criticizes Voznesensky, but ends up declaring her love for him because:

> There is, whether you praise him or judge him,
> something of the prophet, something of the buffoon in him,
> to him the world is hot, like a frying pan,
> and it burns his fingers till they bleed.
>
> (I chto-to v nem, khvali ili kori,
> est' ot proroka, est' ot skomorokha,
> i mir emu - goriach kak skovorodka
> szhigaiushchaia ruki do krovi.)

In the 1962 poem "In That Month of May, In That Month of Mine" (V tot mesiats mai, v tot mesiats moi), the poet defines herself in relation to innocence and experience. In "that month of May," she was like a bird rejoicing in the excellent flying conditions and the sweet anticipation of its own singing, but now she has known suffering: "and every sigh and every flight/ costs me more dearly every day" (i kazhdyi vzdokh i kazhdyi vzlet/ obkhoditsia mne vse dorozhe). She now looks at the world "with the smile of an old Jew" (s usmeshkoi starogo evreia), and her vision has broadened to include not just the 'spring', but also the 'winter' and the 'summer' of life :

> I see the clamour of the rooks
> hovering over the black snow
> and the boredom in the eyes of women
> bending over their knitting.
>
> And somewhere, piping his pipe,
> with no regard for the flowerbeds,
> someone else's child runs about,
> upsetting their order.
>
> (Ia vizhu, kak grachi galdiat
> nad chernym snegom navisaia,
> kak skuchno zhenshchiny gliadiat
> sklonivshiesia nad viazaniem.

I gde-to, v dudochku dudia,
ne sobliudaia klumb i griadok
chuzhoe begaet ditia
i narushaet ikh poriadok) (stanzas 5-6)

Whenever she writes about herself, Akhmadulina always stresses this duality of winter and summer, wisdom and innocence, rationality and irrationality. In the narrative poem "My Genealogy" (Moia Rodoslovnaia), 1963, she metaphorically attributes her duality of mind to her mixed nationality (Italian, Tartar, Russian), and this is also the strategy of the 1961 "Traffic Lights" (Svetofory). Here, the poet defines herself in terms of "that kind, Slavonic common sense/ and the oblique, Asiatic aggressiveness" (tot dobryi rassudok slavianskii/ i kosoi aziatskii napor). The traffic lights, of course, represent "Slavonic" reason; the poet knows they are there to protect her, yet she sees "movement, movement" as the only solution to her inner conflict, and so choses to ignore the lights: "I give myself up to be consumed/ by the speed that lies ahead" (Otdaiu sebia na s"edenie/ etoi skorosti vperedi). Reckless driving, for which Akhmadulina is notorious in real life, here becomes synonymous with passion and intensity of experience as in Kerouac's work.

The republic of Georgia, romanticized in the nineteenth century by Pushkin and Lermontov, occupies a special place in Akhmadulina's life as in her poetry. She spends time there every summer, and in her poetic universe Georgia is a land of eternal summer: "and in our time from winter to summer/ is half a year of life, two hours' flight" (i v nashe vremia ot zimy do leta/ polgoda zhizni, leta dva chasa).[55] Akhmadulina's poetic Georgia is the equivalent of that 'other kingdom' of the fairy-tale, where the rules of common sense are suspended, where the "traffic lights" and park "flowerbeds" are replaced by streams and mountains, and where immediate, authentic experience is the norm. At times the consciousness of Georgia reconciles the poet with herself and with life as in "Dreams of Georgia" (Sny o Gruzii), 1967:

Dreams of Georgia - what joy !
And towards dawn how pure
the sweetness of grapes
blessing my lips.
I regret nothing
I want nothing -
in golden Sveti-Tskhoveli
I light a modest candle.
I sing the praise

of the smallest pebbles of Mtskheta.
O Lord, let this
forever be the way it is.
Let there forever be
novelty and magic for me
in the harshness of my beloved motherland
and the tenderness of my adopted land.

(Sny o Gruzii - vot radost' !
i pod utra kak chista
vinogradovaia sladost',
osenivshaia usta.
Ni o chem ia ne zhaleiu
nichego ia ne khochu -
v zolotom Sveti-Tskhoveli
stavliu bednuiu svechu.
Malym kamushkam vo Mtskheta
vozdaiu khvalu i chest'.
Gospodi, pust' budet eto
vechno tak, kak nyne est'.
Pust' vsegda mne v novost'
i kolduiut nado mnoi
miloi rodiny surovost',
nezhnost' rodiny chuzhoi.)

At other times, the longing to be forever united with Georgia is identified with the longing for a pre-conscious state of gratification, as in "To Sleep" (Spat'), 1967: "I -- dancing under the moon of Mtskheta,/ I -- weeping with every muscle in my body,/ ... / O Lord, how I want to sleep/ ... / sleep forever/ in seclusion, as in the maternal womb" (Mne -- pliashushchei pod Mtskhetskoiu lunoi,/ mne -- plachushchei liuboiu myshtsei v tele,/ ... / O Gospodi, kak mne khotelos' spat'/ ... / spat' vsegda, / spat' zamknuto, kak v materinskom chreve.)

"Fairy-tale about the Rain" (Skazka o Dozhde), 1964, a long, narrative poem "In Several Episodes With Dialogues and a Children's Chorus", is the young Akhmadulina's most complete statement of self-definition, anticipated and echoed in many other major poems such as "Fever" (Oznob), 1963, or "How Long Since I" (Kak dolgo ia ne), 1967.

To a Russian, rain as a poetic image will always be associated with the poetry of Pasternak where it is symbolic of the life force renewing itself, of artistic creation, and of God's love for his creation. In "Fairy-tale," the "Rain" is personified, and, like the "little airplanes," seeks out the poet, demanding her love and protection, posing variously as a small daughter, a beggar, a puppy, and a monkey sitting on her shoulder. In episode II, the poet tries to get rid of the Rain, because she has another engagement, a visit to make in "that house" (tot dom), where the hardwood floors are like an "amber lake" and the chandelier like "a bright moon." But then the Rain looks at her with the eyes of an "orphan," and she decides to take it along.

In episode IV, the poet explains the attraction of "that house". It is an image of Apolline order and harmony. There is no suffering here : "Oh here no sharp corners will hurt the elbow/ here no knife will cut the finger" (O zdes' ugly ne ushibaiut lokot'/ zdes' palets ne porezhetsia nozhom), but there is also no life. The static beauty of "that house" is epitomized in the image of the crystal ware "imprisoned by the cupboard - my sleeping princess " (plénennyi shkafom - moiu tsarevniu spiashchuiu). Akhmadulina's sleeping princess combines features of Sleeping Beauty and Snow White; in the following, there are associations to the seven dwarfs and the glass coffin of Snow White: "That spectrum blushing in seven rosy hues/ in a glass coffin, dead and lovely" (Tot v sem' rumiantsev rozovevshii spektr/ v grobu stekliannom, mertvyi i prelestnyi).

In episode V, the fashionable hostess, with exaggerated solicitude, invites the poet to warm herself by the fire, but the poet, seeing that the hostess' hostility is barely suppressed by her wish to appear with it, cuts through to the reality of the situation. Somewhere in a different time, she says, they might have met in a square, to the sound of drums, and the hostess would have shouted not "To the fire" (K ogniu), but "On the fire with her !" (V ogon' ee !). But then the poet is not afraid of the fire; if the Rain is her ally, so is the fire:

> Fire, my brother, my many-tongued dog !
> Lick my hands in your great tenderness !
> You are Rain too ! Your burn is so moist !
>
> (Ogon', moi brat, moi pes mnogoiazykii !
> Lizhi mne ruki v nezhnosti ogromnoi !
> Ty tozhe Dozhd' ! Kak vlazhen tvoi ozhog !)

Yet in the same episode, the poet is on the verge of betraying the Rain under the influence of the host's paternal benevolence (he is apparently a critic, a kinsman of "my neighbor the literary scholar" from "How Long Since I") : "Don't listen to me ! I'm raving ! / I begged. -- This is all the Rain's doing." (Ne slushaite menia ! Ved' ia v bredu ! -- / prosila ia. -- Vse eto Dozhd' nadelal.) But when she sees the Rain crying outside, two tears of solidarity appear in the poet's eyes.

In episodes VI and VII, two more nasty females make an appearance, and the situation becomes reminiscent of the one in Ginsberg's "In Society." The first one asks the poet whether her husband is rich, and the poet says yes, in a way he is, because she has taught him magic. He is now able, like an artist, to turn any precious object into "rings in the water, a small animal, or a leaf of grass" (v krug na vode, v zver'ka ili v travku). The poet then asks for the lady's ring to demonstrate the trick, and when this request is turned down, she adds: "And by the way, there is one more detail :/ I have this urge to die in the gutter." (--I, znaete, eshche odna detal' -/ menia vlechet podokhnut' pod zaborom.) The second female guest asks how it is that some people have a God-given talent, what have they done to deserve it. The poet explains that talent may be a gift from God, but it is a gift of suffering: "But from then on you fly up and down, / smashing your knees and elbows until they bleed / against the snow, the air..." (A dalee -- letite vverkh i vniz, / v krov' razbivaia lokti i kolenki / o sneg, o vozdukh...)

When the children of the hosts are brought in, in episode VIII, the poet is ready to forgive the hostess her vulgarity, recognizing that her "animal genius" (zverinyi genii) has brought forth something perfect, but she is immediately disillusioned by the "Children's Chorus" of episode IX. The children reveal that they are "little money / growing in the bank" (malen'kie den'gi / okrepshie v kazne), designed to make up for the parents' shortcomings, but destined to reproduce the "poshlost'" ('vulgarity'/ 'banality'/ 'pettiness'/ 'meanness') of the parents.

Having mused upon the poisonous milk that the hostess has fed her children, the poet nevertheless accepts a drink from her in episode XI. There are some reverberations of the Snow White / Sleeping Beauty motif here. The wine poured into the crystal glass can be seen as symbolic of the kiss that brings Snow White back to life , or of the roses which - in some versions of the tale - suddenly bloom in the hedge around Sleeping Beauty's castle when the hundred years are up. In any case, the wine causes a Dionysian explosion in the poet's mind:

> How strong the smell of roses from the wine !
> Wine, you are the only one not guilty !
> The atom of the grape has been split inside me.
> In me two different roses are at war.
>
> (Kak krepko pakhnet rozoi ot vina !
> Vino lish' ty ni v chem ne vinovato !
> Vo mne passhcheplen atom vinograda.
> Vo mne gorit dvukh raznykh roz voina.)

At this point the poet decides no longer to hide the fact that she is a living, suffering being, even though this is madness, even deformity in the eyes of the other guests, making her a "clown" and a "cripple." She offers herself up to the other guests at the party, assuring them of her love: "Here is my skin - naked, big / like a canvas ready for the paint! A clean surface ready for wounds!" (Vot moia kozha - golaia, bol'shaia, / kak kholst dlia krasok ! Chist prostor dlia ran!) Finally she calls the Rain into the house, leading up to the battle scene of episode XII.

The Rain first appears as giant orange (fire-coloured) blotches on the white ceiling, and from that moment all the guests and the house itself unite in their fight against it, mopping it up, wringing it out, piercing it with their heels. The poet now comes out clearly in defense of the Rain, assuming responsibility for it : "--Don't touch it ! It is mine !" (Ne trogaite ! On moi !). When the poet leaves the party, the earth seems to have overheated, the horizon is (blood) red, glowing, and the weather forecast promises no rain in the foreseeable future. The battle is temporarily lost, but, as if taking a vow of fidelity to the life of rain and fire, the poet stoops to kiss a small puddle of water on the dry asphalt.

4.3. POETS AS PROPHETS AND PERFORMERS.

After the great captains and engineers have
accomplish'd their work,
After the noble inventors, after the scientists,
the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the poet worthy of that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his songs.
(Walt Whitman, "Passage to India")

I Boga glas kọ mne vozzval:
"Vosstan', prorok, i vizhd', i
vnemli,
Ispolnis' voleiu moei
I' obkhodia moria i zemli,
Glagolom zhgi serdtsa liudei."
(Aleksandr Pushkin, "Prorok")

(And God's voice called out to me :
"Rise up, prophet, and see, and
hear,
Be filled with my intention
And, wandering the seas and lands,
Burn the hearts of people with the word.")
(Alexander Pushkin, "The Prophet")

4.3.0.

In this chapter, I will look at the way in which the Beat and New Wave poets define their own role, and that of poetry, in the world.

The belief in art as a means of changing the world, possibly the only means of saving the world, is perhaps the single most important distinguishing feature of both these movements, and it is the most striking similarity between them. When Michael McClure says "We're the government in exile" (see interview, p. 71), he is counting on his words to have a shock effect. On the other hand, the idea of Russian literature as a kind of collective conscience, the 'parliament' the Russians never had, is a commonplace. For as long as Russian literature has existed, it has been regarded as a political factor and subjected to censorship; countless scholars have commented on the special role of the poet/writer in Russian and Soviet society.[1] Inevitably, this traditional belief in the power of literature reflects on the self-understanding of any Russian writer and, as E. Steffensen suggests in a recent newspaper article, it may be a self-fulfilling belief: "I don't know how the Russians in general look upon religion and atheism, but it is a fact that they believe in their best writers as if they could work miracles. They may not be able to walk on the water, but they can reverse the flow of rivers -- or prevent that from happening. A myth ? Perhaps, but it functions as a truth."[2]

Insofar as it is based on a teleological concept of literature, Socialist Realism, the prescribed 'method' of Soviet literature, is, of couse, also part of this tradition; as E. Mozejko points out,[3] the idea that art can and must contribute to revolutionary change, is at the very core of the doctrine. But while it is obvious from their poetry as well as from their public statements that the New Wave poets have an acute sense of social responsibility, it is equally obvious that they do not generally practice Socialist Realism. In their view of the nature and function of poetry, they are , in fact, more in line with Whitman and the American Beats than with Socialist Realism. They see themselves as prophets, rather than 'engineers of human souls'.

In The Metapoetry of Evtushenko, Axmadulina, and Voznesenskii , N. Condee discusses the relationship of these three poets with 'the people', against the background of the traditional role of the poet in Russia on the one hand, and Socialist Realism with its concepts of 'narodnost" (people-mindedness) and 'partiinost" (party-mindedness) on the other. Condee believes the tenets of Socialist Realism to be a pervasive influence on Soviet writers, whether or not they consciously embrace them. In the case of Voznesensky, she finds that he is:

> the furthest removed from the Stalinist ethos and closest to Western modernism, having in fact close personal ties with the American Beats. It is thus all the more surprising that we should find in his metapoetry repeated emphasis on the kinds of social responsibility and public moral imperative from which the Beats so often felt they must retreat.[4]

Condee does not seem to distinguish clearly between the traditional role of the Russian poet and the role assigned to the Soviet poet by Socialist Realism. But if the Russian poet/writer is traditionally a figure of critical opposition, then the role in which Socialist Realism casts the Soviet poet is essentially a 'conservative' one. The ability to see 'objective truth', according to official Soviet ideology, rests with the Party as the avant-garde of the revolutionary class. Thus the poet, if he would be truthful, cannot be in opposition to the Party, and once the Party is established in power, this makes the poet a supporter of the established power. The status of the poet as a kind of sympathetic reporter is of course very far from Voznesensky's image of the poet as rebel and martyr, which we have already touched upon in the preceding chapters. But if we assume that Voznesensky believes in his own ability, as a poet, not only to report the truth, but to see it in the first place, then there is no contradiction between, on the one hand, his opposition to the Stalinist ethos and his ties with the Beats and, on the other hand, his sense of social responsibility .

As for the Beats, it is obvious from the viewpoint of today that few poets, before or after, have interacted with society more energetically and persistently than Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti, and Snyder and McClure certainly do not see themselves as 'disengaged' either. As early as in 1959, Ferlinghetti said that he would:

> give the horse laugh to the idea of Disengagement and the Art of the Beat Generation ... And that Abominable Snowman of modern poetry, Allen Ginsberg, would probably say the same. Only the dead are disengaged. And the wiggy nihilism of the Beat hipster, if carried to its natural conclusion, actually means the death of the creative artist himself.[5]

Neither the Beats nor the New Wave poets saw poetry as a vehicle for political programmes; they believed in the higher mission of poetry as a means of bringing about spiritual liberation, but they also believed that spiritual liberation would have social consequences. In other words, they saw no contradiction between the spiritual and social missions of poetry. Their active involvement with their audiences testifies to the fact that they did not reject the notion of the poet's social responsibility.

During our investigation of their revolt and their values, it has become evident, that the Beat Generation and the New Wave have much in common with the Romantic movement in literature. One could mention such features as the revolt against reason, the attraction to the exotic, the bohemianism,the celebration of the individual, the emotions, and the imagination, the interest in drugs, the liberation of the unconscious, and finally "the revolution in the'mind against thinking in terms of the separation between time-matter (ultimately, earth) and eternity-spirit (ultimately, heaven),"[6] which is Raymond Benoit's definition of Romanticism. And when it comes to the self-understanding of the Beat and New Wave poets, a comparison with the Romantics is again in order. Morse Peckham has defined the role of the Romantic poet in the following terms:

> In short, the self does not emerge from the perception of order and value in the world; rather, order and value emerge from the perception of the self ... Man therefore redeems the world; and since in the poet the imagination is

> predominant, the poet is the primary source of value -- in traditional language, redemption. The Romantic poet thus takes upon himself the role of Christ; he becomes Christ, and he is himself his own redeemer and the model for the redemption of mankind. Eventually this task of the artist is extended to every human being.[7]

The concept of the poet as redeemer and prophet, someone chosen to see and communicate a truth otherwise inaccessible, is what Tytell has in mind when he calls Ginsberg "a living example of Romanticism,"[8] and it is common to both the Beat and the New Wave poets. Thus, Allen Ginsberg exclaims, in Wichita Vortex Sutra," 1966: "I call all Powers of imagination/ to my side in this auto to make Prophecy,"[9] and Voznesensky says: "Actually, poets in Russia have always had a special place, from Pushkin through Blok and Pasternak; they were not only poets but prophets as well. And therefore our poets bear a great responsibility."[10]

Unlike the Romantics, the Beat and New Wave poets live in the age of mass communication; as prophets, if their voice was to compete with other voices, they also had to become public figures, performers. As T. Parkinson wrote, in 1968:

> A new order is established of the living gods, contemporary legends, stars in active influence. The way of the world. Some poets, Allen Ginsberg, Voznesensky, Robert Duncan, Denise Levertov or Robert Lowell, have the status of such celebrities as Norman Mailer and Stokeley Carmichael.[11]

In Russia, the idea of poetry as an oral art has always been kept alive both by public readings and by the widespread practice among the people of reciting poetry to each other in private; but crowds on the scale of those attracted to public readings by the New Wave poets had not been seen before. In the American context, the poetry reading as public entertainment, associated with the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance and embraced by the Beats, was more of an innovation. To both the Beat and the New Wave poets, the stage became part of the effort, as Voznesensky puts it, to "widen the auditorium for poetry, from the living room to the stadium,"[12] and to promote poetry as a collective experience, an alternative to other such experiences offered by the mass media. Voznesensky writes that if different times and generations had associated such concepts as "The Poet and the Muse," "The Poet and the Czar," "The Poet and Solitude," etc., then, in the 60s, the association of "The Poet and the Square" became a reality for the first time.[13]

In the following, I will examine the implications of the Beat and New Wave poets' view of themselves as prophets and performers, as expressed in three areas: 1. What, according to the poets, is the nature of artistic creation, and what, consequently, is the relationship between poetry and the life of the poet? 2. What is the place or the mission of the poet, in the universe and in society? 3. What is the nature of the relationship between the poet and the audience ?

Since my concern here is metapoetical, and since the poets I will be dealing with have already been introduced, I will abandon the practice, established in the two preceding chapters, of analyzing central poems in their entirety and in the context of the poets' oeuvres. Instead, I will compare metapoetical statements by Akhmadulina, Evtushenko, Voznesensky, Ginsberg, and Ferlinghetti, selected from their poems as well as from other sources.

4.3.1 The Nature of Artistic Creation. The Relationship between Poetry and Personal Life.

Along with the idea of the poet as prophet goes the idea of inspiration, of the poet as an elect, the instrument or mouthpiece of some higher force. We find this idea expressed in its most extreme form in the poetry of Bella Akhmadulina.

Metapoetry makes up a very large proportion of Akhmadulina's work as a whole, and within the metapoetry, the writing process itself occupies the most important place. She makes it abundantly clear that, to her, being a poet means having the task of writing forced upon her. Thus, in "Sunday" (or "Resurrection day") (Voskresnyi den'), 1962[14], she describes herself during the creation of a poem as a "muscle" necessary for the purpose of "speech" (rech'), a "whistle" for speech to blow.

Akhmadulina is ambivalent in her attitude to the creative process. Once in a while, it is described as a joyful, spontaneous response to life, something like the play of a child: "Like a child/ making a snowman/ it is easy to create, to create jokingly" (kak eto delaet ditia,/ kogda iz snega babu lepit,/ tvorit' legko, tvorit' shutia)[15] . But the easiness is usually unmasked as a delusion; serious creation is described as painful, so much so, that at times it seems as though the poet is driven to write by some sadomasochistic eros:

> I settle at the table uncomfortably
> holding my head and shoulders
> so that they will be hurt and wounded by the process
> that draws speech to my lips.
>
> (V nelovkoi poze u stola prisev
> raspolagaiu golovu i plechi
> chtob obizhal i ranil ikh protsess

k ustam vlekushchii voskhozhdenie rechi.)[16]

The pain of creating is surpassed only by the pain of being unable to create. Akhmadulina conceives of poetry as sound, and usually refers to it, in her metapoetry, as music, singing, or speech; correspondingly, the inability to write is usually described in terms of 'muteness' (nemota): "The rough, iron sound of muteness gasping/ tortures my throat, drawing blood with its scraping./ I start to speak - my handkerchief stains with blood" (Zvuk nemoty, zheleznyi i koriavyi, terzaet gorlo ssadinoi krovavoi./ zagovoriu - i obagriu platok)[17].

In "Muteness" (Nemota), 1966, the "sound of muteness" is imitated through the use of mainly monosyllabic words, making this line sound like a croak: "Ia krichu, no, kak par izo rta" (I scream, but, like vapour from my mouth).

"Who was so strong and clever?/ Who stole the voice from my throat?" (Kto byl tak silen i umen?/ Kto moi golos iz gorla uvel?) the poet asks, in the same poem. Who indeed is the force that tortures the poet either by forcing her to write or by rendering her mute? In "Winter's Day" (Zimnii den'), it is the winter's day itself, that forces her to work, oblivious to her plea to be relieved of the task:

Allow me to pass up this task
to be content with my modest fame.
But -- the snow from the clouds! But -- the smoke from the chimneys!
And it is impossible to keep from working.

(Pozvol' ostavit' etot trud
i bednoi slavoi uteshat'sia.
No -- sneg iz tuch! No -- dym iz trub!
I nevozmozhno uderzhat'sia.)

Similarly, in most poems, everything, all the objects around her, seem to implore the poet to give them voice, as if only her doing so would ensure their existence. Occasionally, it is the abstract concept of "Poetry" or "Art" that is making demands on the poet. In "Winter's Day," the barely recognizable figure of Pasternak appears as if to remind her of the standards she must set for her work. In "Lunatics" (Lunatiki), 1961, she compares the relationship between herself and "art" to that between the "lunatic" sleep-walker and the moon. Responding to the artist's calling, then, is like being disturbed in one's sleep.

The opposition of sleeping and writing poetry occurs in many of Akhmadulina's poems and is central to her understanding of the poet's fate. In most cases, as for instance in "Sunday," it seems as though the poet would prefer sleeping:

> Long-awaited sleep forgives me.
> Child-like lightness kisses my forehead.
> My temple is gay and free
> My elbow sleeping on the pillow is free.
>
> (Menia proshchaet dolgozhdannyi son.
> Tseluet v lob mladencheskaia legkost'.
> Svoboden - legkomyslennyi visok.
> Svoboden - spiashchii na podushke lokot'.)

Yet, in the same poem, the renewed call to write poetry is described in terms of 'resurrection'. The poet does not really exist outside her poetry. After finishing a poem: "Again I will sleep, like dead/ and be awakened, as if resurrected, in the morning" (A mne opiat' - zasnut', kak umeret',/ i probudit'sia utrom, kak voskresnut'). Writing is painful, but it is living; sleep is sweet and painless, but death-like. To the poet, then, the urge to write and the urge to 'sleep' are Eros and Thanatos; she can no more chose between writing and not writing that between living and not living.

The idea of the poet as an instrument played on by Poetry is also present in the work of Voznesensky and Evtushenko, although to Evtushenko it is perhaps little more that a figure of speech. At the same time, both Voznesensky and Evtushenko speak more openly about the craftsmanship of the poet. In "Autumn in Sigulda," Voznesensky speaks of 'genius' as an external force that enters the poet, animating him. The imagery used here almost gives the impression of an assault, as in some of Akhmadulina's poems:

> ...into
> My transparent shoulders
> Genius drove
> Like a red male fist that enters
> A rubber glove
>
> (v prozrachnye moi lopatki
> voshla genial'nost', kak
> v rezinovuiu perchatku
> krasnyi muzhkoi kulak.)[18]

While he does not go as far as Akhmadulina, to describe the writing process as compulsive and involuntary, Voznesensky does stress the unconscious and irrational elements involved in artistic creation:

> I write poems with my feet. I don't mind the ambiguity of that phrase. I walk my poems out, or rather, they walk me. While I am walking, I experience the rhythm of the street, of my troubled heart, of the crowd or the forest almost as a touch, almost subconsciously.[19]

In the short poem "Poems Are Not Written" [Stikhi ne pishutsia], 1973, Voznesensky comes close to Ginsberg's idea of poems as spontaneous "happenings" in the mind, using, in fact, Ginsberg's phrase ("How 'Kaddish' happened"): "Poems are not written - they happen/ like emotions, like the sunset" (Stikhi ne pishutsia - sluchaiutsia/ kak chuvstva ili zhe zakat).

Evtushenko, too, speaks of being chosen by "Poetry," for instance in "Poetry Gives Off Smoke" (Poeziia chadit), 1966:

> Poetry gives off smoke,
> but it doesn't die out.
> It acts kind of crazy, flutteringly,
> when it chooses us:
>
> (Poeziia chadit
> da vot ne vymiraet.
> Poeziia chudit
> kogda nas vybiraet.)[20]

But to Evtushenko "Poetry" is not an absolute, a synonym for truth, as it is for Akhmadulina and Voznesensky. The word 'talent' occurs frequently in his poetry, and he makes it clear that talent alone makes no one a poet. Talent is one thing, honesty another, and the latter is more important: "When ... the talentless go to fight for truth/ then I am ashamed for you, talent" (kogda ... idet na boi za pravdu bestalannost' --/ talantlivost', mne stydno za tebia).[21]

In "The Cocks" (Petukhi), 1960, Evtushenko addresses his muse, asking her forgiveness for having been unfaithful to her, but justifies himself by claiming that, even if he has betrayed his muse, he has always listened to the "cocks' of the world who: "summon us to shatter sleep/ be it the drowsiness of our conscience" (zovut ko vzryvu sonnosti,/ byd' eto sonnost' sovosti). What distinguishes the true poet, in Evtushenko's view, is his honesty, his conscience and his sensitivity to the suffering of others:

> The degradation of the living and the dead,
> in this world,
>   still so far from paradise,

still demands my help,

(Unizhennost' i mertvykh i zhivykh
na svete,
        chto eshche dalek do raia,
potrebuet...)[22]

In "The First Presentiment" (Predoshchushchenie), 1965, the "real poet" is characterized as someone who takes the guilt of the whole world upon himself, and the birth of a poem is consequently described in the following way:

The first presentiment of a poem
in a real poet
is the feeling of a sin
committed somewhere, sometime.[23].

(Predoshchushchenie stikha
u nastoiashchego poeta
est' oshchushchenie grekha
chto sovershen kogda-to, gde-to)

Both the Beat and the New Wave poets work, as we have seen, on the assumption that the universal is reached through the self, that truth is experienced subjectively and that poetry, therefore, starts with subjective experience and introspection. But if the poet is not only a literary craftsman, but also a prophet and visionary, what, then, is the relationship between the poet's life and his poetry?

All the poets we are dealing with seem to agree that life and poetry are inseparable. Voznesensky says: "my life story is my poems,"[24] and Evtushenko says the same thing, ironically enough in the introduction to his autobiography: "The autobiography of a poet is his poems. Everything else is just footnotes to his autobiography."[25] But if Akhmadulina believes that the poet lives through poetry, and Voznesensky that poetry reflects the poet's life, then Evtushenko and Ginsberg are, each in their own way, more radical in their interpretation of the relationship between life and poetry.

Evtushenko seems to believe that the poet, because of his special intuition and sensitivity, is able to have true, subjective experience about everything -- everything is the poet's personal concern and becomes part of his life -- hence Evtushenko's own habit of recording, in poetry, his personal feelings about current events even in remote parts of the world.

Ginsberg, on the other hand, seems to start from the premise that since he is a prophet, a Seer, everything he sees must be important:

> fading but fat bodies remain
> in bed with me warm passionless
> unless I exercise myself like a dumbbell
> O my Fiftieth year approaching
> Like Tennessee like Andy a failure, big nothing --
> very satisfactory subjects for Poetry.[26]

He has published his private journals and is often aggressively personal in his poetry, sometimes with a tinge of irony, as in "Today," 1964: "Like today I brought home blueberry pie for the first time in years --/ Also today bit by a mosquito (to be precise, toward dawn)/ (toward dusk ate marshmallows ...."

Ginsberg's insistence on personal details is dictated by his Whitman-inspired belief that "Without self-acceptance there can be no acceptance of other souls."[27] Self-acceptance, then is a precondition for the experience of oneness, which Ginsberg, following his Blake-visions, believes to be the true subject of poetry. Total self-acceptance requires total self-revelation and this goal became determining for Ginsberg's poetic method, which is, as we have seen, greatly influenced by Kerouac's theory of spontaneous composition. "First thought best thought,"[28] says Ginsberg, defining the poet's task as that of capturing that "first" thought and transcribing it into language:

> Trouble with conventional form ... is, it's too symmetrical, geometrical, numbered and pre-fixed -- unlike to my own mind which has no beginning and end, no fixed measure of thought (or speech -- or writing) other than its own cornerless mystery -- to transcribe the latter in a form most nearly representing its actual "occurrence" is my "method."[29]

Ginsberg emphasises that "transcription" is no mechanical process, it requires "the skill of freedom of composition," and the poet's mind must be "trained, i.e. let loose, freed -- to deal with itself as it actually is, and not to impose on itself, or its poetic artifacts, an arbitrarily preconceived pattern."[30]

To Ferlinghetti, the poet must be not only a Seer but also a Thinker; like Evtushenko, he always stresses the involvement of the conscious mind in the creative process. Thus, discussing his own "surrealist" streak, he says:

> What's automatic? ... Dictation direct from the psychic-spiritual force

> somewhere into the pen ... that's the only pure "automatic" writing, when a person who's writing doesn't even know what he's writing; he's just an instrument being dictated to by someone or something else. If I were being dictated to by some being or force, I would change the dictation ...I don't like dictators, not even poetic ones![31]

Ferlinghetti's way of taking the whole world personally also resembles that of Evtushenko; he too feels that it is the horror, the "sins" of the modern world that have forced him into the position of the dissenting poet, stressing, at the same time, that poetry is a personal response: " ... a poet against my will, no other life-alternative ... poetry the only self-solution, the last and only resort ... finding my body then upon that beach in time and broken consciousness."[32]

Yet, while the poetics of Evtushenko and Ferlinghetti may be similar in theory, there is, of course, a sharp contrast between Evtushenko's heroic-dramatic gestures of identification with suffering humanity everywhere and Ferlinghetti's understatements ,as for instance in "Autobiography:"

> I have seen them.
> I am the man.
> I was there.
> I suffered
> somewhat.[33]

4.3.2. The Spiritual and Social Mission of Poetry.

Can the poet be a spiritual Seer and a social rebel at the same time? Ginsberg found his answer to this question in the figure of Walt Whitman, and I believe that Whitman can serve as a model for describing the attitudes of Ferlinghetti, Evtushenko and Voznesensky as well. As evident in the lines from "Passage to India," chosen as an epigraph for this chapter, Whitman does not distinguish between his social and spiritual ideals; they are part of the same vision. Neither does he distinguish between the experiences of wholeness of self and oneness with others. As Ginsberg explains, in his letter to Eberhart, Whitman's vision of "Democracy" is based on "holy self-love:"

> He was the first great American poet to take action in recognizing his individuality, forgiving and accepting Him Self, and automatically extending that recognition and acceptance to all -- and defining his Democracy as that. He was unique and lonely in his glory -- the truth of his feelings -- without which no society can long exist. Without this truth there is only the impersonal Moloch

and self-hatred of others.[34]

In "Poetry, Violence and The Trembling Lamb," Ginsberg expresses a world view based on two opposed forces: the conspiracy vs. poetry. The aim of the conspiracy is to "impose one level of mechanical consciousness on mankind," while poetry -- as Ginsberg had realised during his Blake experience and vowed never to forget -- is "the record of individual's insights into the secret soul of the individual -- and, because all individuals are One in the eyes of their Creator, into the soul of the World." But, seeing into the soul of the World also gives the poet "some insight ... into the nature of governments."[35] This is, in essence, the content of what Ginsberg called "my political statement"[36] in 1960.

In "Death to Van Gogh's Ear," 1957, Ginsberg declares that "I will die only for poetry, that will save the world." The poem is a visionary attack on the "conspiracy:"

> fortunately all the governments will fall
> the only ones which won't fall are the good ones
> and the good ones don't yet exist
> But they have to begin existing they exist in my poems
> they exist in the death of the Russian and American governments.
> They exist in the death of Hart Crane & Mayakovsky
> Now is the time for prophecy without death as a consequence.

Ferlinghetti firmly believes in a kind of visionary action poetry, that can change the world: "prophecy being the one great lost art of modern poets, none of them daring it, except for Whitman-Ginsberg guru." In "Genesis of 'After the Cries of the Birds'," Ferlinghetti explains, through the example of his own poem, what he means by prophetic poetry. Poetry must be protest, provoked by social indignation: "Poem begun then in alienation by the Man Outside, as all tough poems must be, a poem of prophecy alienated from American Nation." On the other hand, poetry must be borne by a vision, the vision of "the Man Outside become the Man Within." This vision is found by introspection: "In the end there is no way to go but In. Into ourselves ... "[37]

In Ferlinghetti's earliest metapoetry, the spiritual mission of poetry is foregrounded. Thus, in A Coney Island Of the Mind "15," the poet is portrayed as an acrobat and "super realist" who must try to catch the "eternal fair form" of "Beauty" out of the "empty air/ of existence," and in "I am Waiting,"[38] he is "awaiting/ perpetually and forever/ a renaissance of wonder."

On the other hand, Ferlinghetti has also written purely political broadside-poems like for instance "Tentative Description of a Dinner given to Promote the Impeachment of President Eisenhower."[39] In the three "Populist Manifestos," his most complete and most poetic statement on poetics, Ferlinghetti has settled for the position of the "street poet," rebel and prophet. The "First Populist Manifesto: For Poets, With Love,"1975, is a call to all poets, "Whitman's wild children," to come out of their closets and into the streets, because "San Francisco's burning/ Mayakovsky's Moscow's burning." Poetry should be "the common carrier/ for the transportation of the public/ to higher places/ than other wheels can carry it,"[40] it should reveal the "collective subjective," [41]like a bird singing the song of ourselves:

And so wails today a still wild voice
inside of us
a still insurgent voice
lost among machines and insane nationalisms
still longing to break out
still longing for the distant nightingale
that stops and begins again
stops
and begins again
stops
and resumes again

It is the bird singing that makes us happy.[42]

To Evtushenko, the true Russian poet is not only a poet but also a tribune and a prophet:

A poet is more than a poet in Russia.
Here only he is destined to be a poet
in whom civil sense ferments to passion,
in whom there is no coziness, no quiet.

Here a poet is the image of his age
in whom the future's prefiguring is seen[43]

(Poet v Rossii - bol'she chem poet.
V nei suzhdeno poetami rodit'sia
lish' tem, v kom brodit veshchii dukh grazhdanstva,
komu uiuta net, pokoia net.

Poet v nei -- obraz veka svoego,
i budushchego prizrachnyi proobraz]

In Evtushenko's metapoetry, art is always involved in conflict :

Poetry
    is no chapel of peace.
Poetry
    is savage war.
It has its own maneuvres of deception.
War
    must be war.
A poet
    is a soldier[44].

(Poeziia -
    ne mirnaia molelnia.
Poeziia -
    zhestokaia voina.
V nei est' svoi, obmannye manevry.
Voina -
    ona voinoiu byt' dolzhna.
Poet -
    soldat)

The image of the poet as a warrior can be found in many other poems too, for instance in "To the Best People of the Generation" (Luchshim iz pokoleniia), 1957, in which the poet asks these "best people" to let him join their "attack" as a trumpeter, vowing to take up arms should his trumpet prove ineffective. Even more frequent than the image of the soldier-poet is that of the rebel-poet, as we have already seen when dealing with Evtushenko's poetic self-portraits. "Great Talent Always Arouses Alarm" (Bol'shoi talant vsegda trevozhit), 1956, describes the career of a poet who enters the scene "shy and bear-like," but "rebellious." However, after the first "battle," he withdraws from the world, reemerging years later to be pampered and showered with praise by the establishment. He now lives in opulence, living proof that "the end of talent/ is the impossibility of rebellion" (konets talanta/ est' nevozmozhnost' miatezha).

These are categorical words, and yet Evtushenko's rebel-poet, even in the earliest poems, cannot be identified with Ferlinghetti's "Man Outside." He is not alienated from society as a whole, rather he is inside, with "the best people," against "lies." Evtushenko often seems at pains to justify the poet's craft as useful to society, and he often does so by likening it to manual labour, thus appealing to the work-centered Soviet ethos (see for instance "Let Us Be Great" (Budem velikimi), 1957). Another favourite device is to describe poetry in terms of various means of transportation: poetry should be an ambulance, not a sports car (Autobiography), it should be a rocket, not a cart ("Rockets and Carts" (Rakety i telegi)), 1959), it is a street car ("The Street Car of Poetry"

(Tramvai poezii), 1968), it is a mail boat ("The Mail Boat" (Kater sviazi), 1963). In "The Mail Boat", the poet conceives of his task as the reuniting of all those people separated by "ice." Once the ice breaks, however, the modest mail boat will be replaced by "real ships."

The idea of himself as a transitional type of poet, to be replaced by a truer one, once society has reached the necessary stage of perfection, is one which Evtushenko has often expressed, in his poetry as well as in his public statements. Yet he can hardly be accused of underestimating his own significance. If Evtushenko sees himself as part of society, as a kind of inside rebel, this does not mean that he conceives of the poet's role as secondary. In "The Stage" (Estrada), 1966, he describes his own experience of the prophetic power of poetry :

As in the Bible,
in the beginning was the word,
and then - well then,
in the word was the explosion.[45]

(Kak v Biblii,
v nachale bylo slovo,
nu, a potom -
sokrytyi v slove vzryv.)

"Golden Gates" (Zolotye Vorota), 1967, describes a trip down the Lena river. One evening, after sunset, an image of golden gates appears in the sky, and it seems to the ship's passengers, that if they could touch these gates, they would spring open "like a chest/ in the giving hands of the creator" (napodobie lartsa/ v rukakh daruiushchikh tvortsa). When the poet's turn at the helm comes, he decides to steer by the golden gates in the sky, opposing himself to the captain whose "iron plan/ did not make room for golden gates" (nedouchel zheleznyi plan/ vorota zolotye).

The themes of the poet as social rebel and public conscience, so prominent in Evtushenko's work, are also present in Voznesensky's; he speaks, for instance, of poetry's obligation to be a kind of collective "organ of shame" (organ styda)[46]. Like Evtushenko, Voznesensky has written poems in the civic vein, including several on the subject of Lenin. But the figure of Lenin in "Longjumeau" (Lonzhiumo), 1963, is perhaps more an image of an artist than anything else. In the poem, the sculptor who has modelled both Lenin and Verlaine exclaims: "Poets and revolutionaries/ have identical skulls!" (U poetov i revoliutsionerov/ odinakovye cherepy!) What poets and revolutionaries have in common, is their involvement in changing the world, and it is most significant that Voznesensky's Lenin is actually killed:

It is poetical to shape the universe
And because he was a poet
Lenin
as Pushkin once
was shot with a poisoned pistol

(Poetichno kroit' Vselennuiu
I sa to, chto on byl poet,
kak kogda-to v Pushkina -
v Lenina
bil otravlennyi pistolet.)

The poet, as he appears in Voznesensky's metapoetry, is a prophet, always on the side of change, and for this he is always victimized. The poet must be prepared to be sacrificed for the redemption of mankind. The image of the suffering poet is omnipresent in Voznesensky's work, but the motif is perhaps most laconically, if ironically expressed in this short poem:

My friend, we've outlived ourselves. That happens.
What bliss.
If they don't kill poets,
it means there are none to kill. (1975)
(The last line can also be translated as "there is nobody to kill")

(Drug moi, my sazhilis'. Byvaet.
Blagodat'.
Paz poetov ne ubivaiut,
znachit nekogo ubivat'.)

The task of the poet, like that of the revolutionary, is to destroy old patterns that have become meaningless and to create new meaning by finding new patterns and shapes which reveal the spiritual essence of the universe.(This is implied in Voznesenky's extensive use of imagery involving transparency, airiness, and various geometrical shapes.) Through his example, the poet must inspire man to become the subject of the world, rather than an object in the world.

The concept of the poet as rebel, then, does not mean the same to Voznesensky as to Evtushenko. Thus, if Evtushenko identifies with "the best people of my generation", Voznesensky is more inclined to identify with the "artists of all times"[47]; and if

Evtushenko speaks contemptuously of a poet who retreats from battle, then Voznesensky writes, in a poem dedicated to Tolstoi, but also suggestive of Pasternak: "In his flight is his victory;/ In his retreat, an ascent" (Pobegi ikh -- pobedy./ Ukhod ikh -- kak voskhod).[48]

Unlike Evtushenko,Voznesensky does not place himself squarely inside society, nor does he directly oppose himself to society politically. Rather, as we have seen, he conceives of poetry as a vital alternative to both the political world view (cf the juxtaposition of artists and political rulers in "Master Craftsmen"), and the scientific world view: "The atomic scientist has broken down the natural world to its particles; it is up to the poet to recreate its unity."[49]

The way in which poetry arrives at the truth is, according Voznesensky, inexplicable -- sensual and irrational; poetry is a "miracle" (chudo).[50] To Voznesensky, the spiritual and social missions of poetry are one:"An artist helps to prevent war by creating beauty. It is as simple as that - or as complicated."[51]

4.3.3. The Poet and the Audience.

Bella Akhmadulina never portrays herself as a social rebel or a people's tribune. Most of her metapoetry is, as we have seen, devoted to the creative process itself, and when she does speak of the mission of poetry, she usually does so in terms of giving voice to something, or filling a void:

Let me contemplate your white light and in it
let me not find some tiny gap
which I, in my zeal,
would want to and be able to fill

(Dai sotsertsat' tvoi belyi svet i v nem
ne obnaruzhit' malogo probela
kotoryi ia, v userdii moem
vospolnit' by zhelala i umela)[52]

the voice of the object keeps murmuring and begging,
its soul desires to be sung of

(bubnit i klianchit golosok predmeta
dusha ego zhelaet byt' vospeta)[53]

Emptiness is waiting to be filled

(Zhdet zapolneniia pustota)[54]

The task of the poet, as Akhmadulina sees it, is to reveal spirit through matter, to fill with meaning what Ferlinghetti called "the empty air of existence." Yet she makes it clear that, in submitting to the force of Poetry, she feels she is fulfilling a social, as well as an artistic calling.

To Condee, Akhmadulina's sense of social responsibility is too abstract to be credible, it "exists in a vacuum,"[55] since Akhmadulina never deals with social issues in her poetry. Condee interprets Akhmadulina's frequently expressed sense of duty towards the public as an empty gesture, a sort of reflex response to the values of Socialist Realism, although these values have never been internalized by the poet.There are, however, two facts which contradict such an interpretation. For one thing, Akhmadulina has not, as far as I can see, written one line of poetry which could be construed as attempt to endear herself to the literary establishment, and furthermore she has always, in her few public statements, been more outspoken than either Evtushenko or Voznesensky. These are facts which have, on the one hand, at times made it difficult for her to get published, and of which, on the other hand, her readership is very much aware. Akhmadulina interprets the poet's social calling as the fight for eveybody's right to their "own free world inside," to use another line by Ferlinghetti, and she has not compromised this fight by her own example. It is when she writes about her relationship with her audience, that her sense of social responsibility becomes concrete.

In "The Word" (Slovo),1965, she quotes a letter of admiration which she has received from "a boy from Perm'" and which has obviously moved her. Suffering one of her regular attacks of poetic "muteness," here described as groping in the dark in someone else's house, the poet thinks of the boy who, in the light of the stars above Perm', "was able to pronounce the word" (kotoryi slovo vygovorit' mog), and the way the boy's letter reached her as a gesture of love becomes a model for what she wants her poetry to do.

In "Poetry Day" (Den' poezii), 1955, the poet speaks of her mixed feelings about poetry turning into a public celebration. The audience is described as trustful, shy and kind-hearted. The receptiveness of the audience makes the poet weary, on the one hand, because such a crowd is easily duped, and on the other hand it makes her hopeful for the future:

> I am left with the vague hope
> that such feasts do not happen in vain.
>
> That it is not in vain that words come to poets' minds,
> not in vain that, when the poets' voices sound,

the eyes of boys and girls shine
with enthusiasm and innocence.

(mne ostaetsia smutnaia nadezhda,
chto prazdniki sluchaiutsia ne zria.

Ne zria slova poetov oseniaiut,
ne zria, kogda zvuchat ikh golosa
u mal'chikov i devochek siiaiut
vostorgom i nevede'em glaza.)

Evtushenko and Voznesensky, too, have at times expressed reservations about the enourmous popularity which poetry enjoyed during the age of mass readings in the early 60s, just as the Beats have reacted against the image of themselves created by the media. Thus, in an interview with Olga Carlisle in 1967, Voznesensky said that "The time has come for poets to try to deepen their appeal instead of broadening it,"[56] and in "The Stage," Evtushenko writes "Stage/ you gave me the light in which to scintillate/ but took away the soft shadow and the subtle gleam"[57] (Estrada,/ ty dala mne razmakh/ i otbirala tainstvo ottenkov). Still it is clear that the New Wave and the Beat poets alike value their relationship with their audience as a community of souls in which they see a seed of hope for the future, the seed of a new culture.

Also in "The Stage," Evtushenko describes how his "broken voice" became the voice of the "broken age" and it was "as if all those things still unexpressed / hiding their tiny glow within the darkness / were suddenly in me and I was one great light" [58] (voshla v menia nevyskazannost' zalov / kak budto nevyskazannost' zarev / kotorye taiatsia v temnote). Evtushenko has often expressed the thought that it is his link with the audience which makes him a poet:"Only the poet who is deeply, organically bound up with his generation can later become the spokesman of moods and feelings common to the entire people."[59] Evtushenko sees his audience as allies in the fight for a better future: "It is not important whether you have persecutors,/ it is important that you have followers" (Ne vazhno -- est' li y tebia presledovateli/ a vazhno -- / est' li u tebia posledovateli).[60]

To Ferlinghetti, too, the poet is someone who sees and says what is going on around him. His aim is the "resocialization" of poetry: "It amounts to getting poetry back into the street where it once was, ... and, in fact, off the printed page. The printed work has made poetry so silent."[61] But when Ferlinghetti speaks of the poet's community with his audience, he does not, as Evtushenko does, operate with such concepts as nation or generation; these are replaced by the street (in Pictures "5", Ferlinghetti declares that "A poem is a mirror walking down a strange street,") by San Francisco, and by the subculture. In the following quotation from "Genesis of 'After the Cries of the Birds'," Ferlinghetti is not only defining his own community, but also comparing his own stance as a poet to that of the New Wave poets (the piece was first read by Ferlinghetti in Berlin, 1967, where he was appearing with Voznesensky):

> But its students in Black Friday City Hall riots against Congressional Committees on Un-American Activities, and its Berkeley Student Movement, and its Free Speech Movement, and its Sexual Freedom Movement, and its free bookstores, and its peace marches, and its Poets Peace Fasts, and its Buddhist temples and its Zen centers and its China-town and its Japan-town and its psychedelic communities and its Poets Outside still telling America to go fuck itself with its bomb (which is something we don't hear those "revolutionary" Russian poets telling their governments) -- all these ephemeral things creating a certain no doubt naive illusion of San Francisco being not quite what the rest of America is, ... San Francisco someday perhaps possibly somehow beginning to be psychedelically what a growing number of its youngest turned-on "Make Love Not War" citizens conceive their own lives to be & thus their own city to be.[62]

In 1963 Voznesensky defined the relationship between the New Wave poets and their audience in the following way:" For us poetry is above all a group experience. The poet creates in solitude, but when he reads his poems to a crowd, he and his public commune. Together they partake of something new and deep."[63] But unlike Evtushenko, Voznesensky always emphasizes the irrational almost mystical nature of this communion; what the audience needs, he says, is not words, but "The Word."[64]

Of particular interest in our context is Voznesensky's poem "Dogalypse" (Sobakalipsis), 1971, inspired by a reading at Simon Fraser University where, for some reason, there were a lot of dogs in the audience. Voznesensky read the poem later on the same tour, at Project Artaud in San Francisco, and it was subsequently translated by Ferlinghetti and published by City Lights.[65] In the poem, the poet calls himself "an earless Moscow mutt/ who has no medals" (ot moskovskoi, bezykhoi suki, / u kotoroi medalei net) and declares his solidarity with his four-footed listeners, as well as with the whole "shaggy generation:"

Shaggy generation, you've got to judge

if God won't judge
those who hang us in supermarkets
those who make like Judas
and make their haul !

(Sudi, lokhmatoe pokolenie !
Esli ne iavitsia bog sudit' --
tekh, kto veshaet nas v bakaleine,
tekh, kto iudit' prishel i udit'.)

What Voznesensky is celebrating here is the international community of those who understand poetry:

Old Rover and old Fido,
they understood without translation --
for the nature of poetry
is not in the grammar, but in the gut.

(Ponimali bez perevoda
Lana Dranaia i Pero,
potomu chto stikhov priroda --
ne grammatika, a nutro.)

The City Lights version of the poem includes two stanzas which were omitted from the Russian version in the Collected Works. One of these is about God: " They understood by breathing deeply. / Before the word was God / moon and dog understood each other.", and the other is about Ferlinghetti:

Bureaucrats drop dead !
A poet is howling.
Ferlinghetti, sheepskin hat --
a red wolf, in a grey sheep's skin,
a lamb in wolf's clothing,
he lights his joint with a bench warrant.
In time of Judgement, a warrant hangs over us all.
And this includes studs and bitches.

Ginsberg, in "Poetry, Violence and The Trembling Lambs", juxtaposes "Those of the general populace whose individual perception is sufficiently weak to be formed by the stereotypes of mass communication" and "The poets and those who share their activities." The latter, the poets' allies, are then defined as the drug users, the hipsters, the sexual minorities, those who refuse to work for money or join armies, and "those who wish to loaf, think, rest in visions, act beautifully on their own." These are the people who, under the guidance of the poets, are to discover a myhtic America "where the spiritual independence of each individual was an America, a universe, more huge and awesome than all the abstract bureaucracies and Authoritative Officialdoms in the world."[66]

"Kral Majales", 1965, deals with Ginsberg's election for King of May by students in Prague. Written from an East European point of view - on the plane after Ginsberg's expulsion by Czech authorities - the poem can be seen as a parallel to Voznesensky's "Dogalypse." Like "Dogalypse", "Kral Majales" celebrates a poetry community linked with subcultural youth and independent of politics, nationalities and time, a "Kingdom of the May of Man" which is opposed to the kingdoms of the "Communists" and the "Capitalists" alike:

> And I am the King of May which is the power of sexual youth,
> ...
> and I am the King of May which is old Human Poesy, and 100.000 people
>   chose my name
> ...
> and I am the King of May, naturally, for I am of Slavic parentage and a
>   Buddhist Jew
> ...
> and the King of May is a Middle European honor, mine in the XX century
> despite space ships and the Time Machine, because I heard the voice of Blake
>   in a vision,
> and repeat that voice.

4.4. CONCLUSION.

In "Dogalypse" and "Kral Majales" we found Voznesensky and Ginsberg identifying with subcultural youth in each other's part of the world and expressing a feeling of belonging to an international community based on Poetry. In the years that have passed since these two poems were written much has changed, but I believe that the early work of the Beat and New Wave poets exhibit enough fundamental similarities to support the view that the two movements were manifestations of one international trend.

Both the Beat and the New Wave poets reacted against an environment which they found to be one-dimensional and therefore dehumanizing. Ginsberg sees a giant, impersonal Moloch, Voznesensky, too, sees a robot world run by scientists, ideologues, and bureaucrats, and Evtushenko sees a system of simplifications posing as authorities and superimposed on the individual consciousness. All of them interpret what they see as a result of the isolation of the intellect from the rest of the person, and all of them see Poetry (Art) as the most expedient response to this situation.

The task of Poetry, to the Beat and New Wave poets, is to restore the cohesion of the Self and consequently of the world, to touch the universal within. The central value in their poetry became experience itself, the "naked" experience which transcends the "mind-illusion mechano-universe of un-feeling Time" (Ginsberg) by involving the whole personality -- the spiritual and the sensual, the conscious and the unconscious, the rational and the irrational. The areas in which such experiences are sought, and the imagery through which they are expressed, are of course determined by the different backgrounds of the individual poets, but some are common: love, sex, friendship, art (painting, architecture, music), the imagination, nature (the sea, the moon, the animals), the elements (fire, air, water), speed (cars, motorbikes), "exotic" lands (Mexico, Georgia, America), wine / drugs.

Because they considered inner liberation a prerequisite for the liberation of the world, the Beat and New Wave poets did not distinguish between the spiritual and social mission of poetry. They believed their poetry to be an urgent message to humanity, and, in order to deliver it in as powerful and immediate a way as possible, they strove to break down the barriers between themselves and their audience by becoming stage performers and poetic activists.

Footnotes: Part Four.

4.0. Introduction.

1. See Iurii Lotman, Analiz poeticheskogo teksta, (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972).

2. D. Weissbort, ed., Post-War Russian Poetry, (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1974), 170.

4.1. Carnival and Subculture: the Nature of the Revolt.

1. Gregory Corso, The Happy Birthday of Death ,(New York: New Directions, 1960), 75.

2. Gregory Corso, " Letter to Lawrence Ferlinghetti", October 1958, City Lights Collection, quoted from Marilyn Schwartz: From Beat to Beatific , unpublished dissertation, (University of California, 1976), 220.

3. Gregory Corso, The Happy Birthday of Death, op. cit., foldout between pages 32 and 33.

4. Gregory Corso, "letter to Lawrence Ferlinghetti", City Lights Collection, quoted from Marilyn Schwartz : From Beat to Beatific, op. cit., 213.

5. George Bowering, How I Hear Howl , (Beaver Kosmos Folio One, 1964/1969), 10.

6. Allen Ginsberg, Howl and Other Poems, (San Francisco: City Lights,1956/1969), 10. All subsequent references are to this edition of "Howl" (pp. 9-22)

7. See Ginsberg's letter to John Hollander included in Jane Kramer, Ginsberg in America , (New York : Random House, 1968), 163-77.

8. Richard Eberhart and Allen Ginsberg, To Eberhart from Ginsberg, (Lincoln, Massachusetts: The Penmaen Press, 1976), 22.

9. ibid., 23.

10. ibid., 25.

11. ibid., 22.

12. See John Tytell's experiment with a passage from Visions of Cody arranged as poetry in John Tytell, Naked Angels. The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation, (New York: McGraw-Hill , 1976), 216.

13. Quoted from John Tytell, Naked Angels, op. cit., 217.

14. Richard Eberhart and Allen Ginsberg, To Eberhart from Ginsberg, op. cit., 27.

15. Allen Ginsberg, Collected Poems 1947-80 (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 5.

16. Richard Eberhart and Allen Ginsberg, To Eberhart from Ginsberg, op. cit., 19.

17. ibid., 28.

18. Allen Ginsberg, Howl and Other Poems, op. cit., 8.

19. Richard Eberhart and Allen Ginsberg, To Eberhart from Ginsberg, op. cit., 32.

20. Harry J. Cargas, Daniel Berrigan and Contemporary Protest Poetry , (New Haven, Conn.: College and University Press, 1972), 78.

21. Jane Kramer , Allen Ginsberg in America, op. cit., 168.

22. Richard Eberhart and Allen Ginsberg, To Eberhart from Ginsberg, op. cit., 32-33.

23. George Bowering, How I Hear Howl, op. cit., 9.

24. Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and his World , (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press,1968), 10.

25. ibid., 307.

26. ibid., 39.

27. Allen Ginsberg , Howl and Other Poems, op. cit., 31-34.

28. Richard Eberhart and Allen Ginsberg , To Eberhart from Ginsberg, op. cit., 33.

29. Mikhail Isakovskii, "Song About Stalin" (Pesnia o Staline), Sbornik Stikhov, (Moscow ,1943). Translation by Vera Dunham in "The Uses of Stalinist Debris", Slavic Review, (March 1973), 116.

30. Unless otherwise indicated, the Voznesensky poems referred to are published in A. Voznesenskii , Sobranie Sochinenii v trekh tomakh (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1983-84). If nothing else is specified, translations are my own, -- I. L.

31. N. Å. Nilsson, "The Parabola of Poetry", Scando-Slavica, X, (Copenhagen: Munksgård, 1964), 53.

32. E. Zamiatin : My, (New York, 1952), 6.

33. A. Voznesensky : Nostalgiia for the Present (New York: Doubleday,1978), 249.

34. translation of parts of this poem in A. Voznesensky, Antiworlds and the Fifth

Ace. A Bilingual Edition. (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 125-31.

35. A. Voznesensky , Antiworlds and the Fifth Ace. , op. cit.Translation by W.H.Auden, 27-31.

36. Antiworlds and the Fifth Ace contains a version of "Oza" based on a 1965 reading and a translation by W.J.Smith and Max Hayward, but as this text differs considerably from all previous and subsequent versions, I have chosen to refer instead to the one included in A. Voznesenskii, Sobranie Sochinenii, vol 1, op. cit., 387-414.

37. See Gerald Janacek, "The Many Faces of Voznesenskii's 'Oza'", Canadian-American Slavic Studies 14/4, (1980), 449-65.

38. Translation by Stanley Moss in A. Voznesensky, Antiworlds and the Fifth Ace, op. cit., 107-11.

39. Molodaia Gvardiia, 10, (Moscow, 1964). The Stalin poem is also included in the Antiworlds and the Fifth Ace version, op. cit., 214.

40. Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and his World, op. cit., 48.

41. ibid., 49.

42. letter to John Hollander in Jane Kramer, Ginsberg in America, op. cit., 170.

43. See V. Nazarenko, "Nastuplenie ili Otstuplenie?", Zvezda, 7, (Moscow, 1962), 181-88.

44. "Nas Mnogo", "Dali Devochke Iskru" (about Bella Akhmadulina), "Ballada Raboty" (about Evtushenko), Akhillesovo Serdtse, (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1966);"Vash palets, Vas Palych" (about Aksyonov), cover of Melodiia record of Aksyonov reading Zhal' chto Vas ne bylo s nami.

45. The image of people trapped in various vehicles racing along a straight line is frequent in Voznesensky's work, as W. Gareth Jones has pointed out. See his "A Look Around, The Poetry of Andrey Voznesensky" in E. J. Brown ,ed., Major Soviet Writers , (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 178-92.

46. E. Etkind, Russische Lyrik von der Oktoberrevolution bis zur Gegenwart, (Munich: Verlag Beck, 1984), 228.

47. E. Evtushenko, Avtobiografiia (London: Flegon Press, 1964), 77.

48. ibid., 98

49. E. Evtushenko, "Prazdnuite Pervoe Maiia", Shosse Entusiastov . (Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1956), 18.

50. Unless indicated, poems by Evtushenko are published in E. Evtushenko,

Izbrannye Proizvedeniia v dvukh tomakh, (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1975). Unless specified, translations are my own. I.L.

51. Russian text and translation by George Reavey in Y. Yevtushenko , The Poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko , (New York: October House, 1967), 144-49.

52. ibid. 206-7.

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AFTERWORD.

There was a group of friends, says Ginsberg, thereby implying that the Beat Generation originally was based on the friendship between him, Kerouac, Corso, Burroughs, Snyder and others. Similarily, Akhmadulina, Aksyonov, Gladilin, Okudzhava, Bitov and Voznesensky stress the importance of personal friendship to the early New Wave. In both cases, there was, indeed, a deep feeling of comradeship, friendship and mutual understanding. Both groups felt surrounded by a society which to them seemed to be based on materialism, militarism, conformism and boredom. They were, and felt like, part of Bohemian subcultures in New York and San Francisco, Moscow and Leningrad.

Disillusioned with the ideologies of material progress, which had led to wars, the holocaust, Stalinism and McCarthyism, they rejected what society had to offer them in terms of security and stability, and, instead, they turned to the outcasts of modern urbanized society -- especially the hipsters and the Blacks in the USA, and the stiliagis and other dissenting subcultures of youth in the USSR. Here they found the values and the lifestyles that satisfied their own longing for another way of life, and in the language and art of the subcultures they found a medium which was perfectly fit to express their own search for another, more authentic and spiritual, dimension to reality.

Thus, these two groups of friends, in each of the world's two vast superpowers, laid the groundwork for two important literary movements in the postwar era. Like other new literary movements before them, such as romanticism, realism and modernism, they seem to have grown out of a mutation of consciousness which was international in scope. The only way to explain the fact that two similar movements emerged, at approximately the same time, in two mutually hostile environments, is by a certain condition of the human psyche, which was created by the specific political, social and cultural development in the world after the war, and deeply influenced by the newly achieved awareness of the possibility of total annihilation of the world by the bomb.

Throughout this dissertation we have pointed out the similarities between the Beat Generation and the New Wave, such as their subcultural nature and the carnivalistic spirit of their revolt; the agressively hostile reaction by the Establishment; the goals and ideals which were basically expressed as a spiritual (religious) quest; the perception of themselves as prophets of spiritual liberation and the view of art as self-revelation and vision leading to a better world.

There were, of course, important differences too, which must be pointed out.

Generally speaking, the conditions were, as Ginsberg pointed out and as we have repeatedly mentioned, much tougher in the Soviet Union. When the New Wave emerged in the second half of the 50s, it was, more or less, officially supported by the Khrushchev regime. Soon, however, Khrushchev turned his back on the young rebels and initiated a series of crack-downs on these "evil Beatniks," because the revolt had run out of party control and turned out to be a threat to the very foundation of the Marxist state -- 'scientific materialism.' Censorship, political repression, bureaucracy etc. prevented the New Wave writers and poets from expressing the whole truth about themselves and the full scope of the movement. They were not even able to present themselves as a new movement with a literary programme as such, since the idea of a new movement was incomprehensible to the adherents of Socialist Realism, and any attempt to confront the doctrine of Socialist Realism directly was immediately violently suppressed by the state.

This is why some of the literature of the New Wave, published in the Soviet Union, seems less direct, more figurative, and, at times, more innocent. But, as we have seen, the intentions and the direction were clearly similar ~~to~~ those of the Beat Generation.

Another important difference is the fact that the Beat Generation was reacting against the capitalist cultural and political establishment of America, whereas the New Wave was a reaction against the Soviet socialist establishment, including the Socialist Realists. Therefore, the Beats tended to become politically more left wing, whereas the New Wave writers and poets turned conservative, politically. This has been especially obvious in the cases of New Wave writers in exile. Being in the West, Aksyonov and Gladilin have hastened to express their resentment of everything connected with the Soviet Union and Marxism. This has, in turn, led to a split, not only between them and some of their ex-brothers in arms, who remain in the Soviet Union, and who follow a line of compromise with the system (e.g. Evtushenko and Voznesensky), but also with their potential allies among the ex-Beats in the West, as for instance Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti, who maintain contacts with Evtushenko and Voznesensky.

Voznesensky and Evtushenko chose to stay in the Soviet Union and take the consequences, that is, to compromise with the demands of the system. Presumably they did so, hoping that a new liberalization would occur and make a renaissance of the New Wave possible. As has lately become obvious, such a renaissance seems possible under the Gorbachev regime, and Voznesensky is one of its most active advocates. Bitov, Akhmadulina and Okudzhava chose a third way: to stay and be quiet; but they too seem to believe in the possibility of a renewal under the politics of 'glasnost". Only time will show whether this will happen or not. The history of the Soviet Union speaks against it, but then again, the Soviet Union has never before had leaders who grew up under the influence of the New Wave and who might have adopted some of its values and attitudes.

Both movements have died long ago and, as Bitov puts it, the individual writers have crystallized and become mature -- the movements have, after all, produced some very important writers and poets. In the USA, this is especially true of the poets; Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti and Snyder have, over the years, been acknowledged as some of the most important contemporary American poets, whereas the prose writers have been less successful, although Kerouac's reputation is still on the increase. But in the Soviet Union (that is, in Russian literature), Aksyonov and Bitov, Voznesensky and Akhmadulina have without doubt been the most significant literary phenomenon since Pasternak and Akhmatova.

In both cases, however, the effect of the movements (that is, their impact on society as a whole) may turn out to be more important than the movements themselves and their literary heritage. The change of consciousness they were promoting was naturally followed by a re-evaluation of values. It is well documented by American scholars, such as John Tytell, that the Beat Generation was the forerunner of much of what happened in the areas of revolt and grassroots in the 60s and the 70s. Many of the values and ideals of the Beat Generation were adopted by the Hippie movement (Bob Dylan, for instance, was deeply inspired by Kerouac and Ginsberg), the student revolt, Black liberation, and the ecological movement, but it may turn out to be more important, that, as Aksyonov puts it, the movement became a life-style. Its values and attitudes -- such as its anti-authoritarian, anti-establishment, and anti-violence attitudes, its promotion of free sex, its tolerance towards "others" and its love of the open mind -- made an impact on a whole generation, as we saw in the 60s, but it is too early to tell whether this impact will be of lasting significance.

With regard to the impact of the New Wave, it is more difficult to assess, except that it produced some good writers. Since the late 60s, Soviet literature has been almost at a stand- still, unable to present new important developments or new faces (this is, by the way, also true of American literature), except for the "village literature." So it is almost impossible to tell whether there have been any "followers" of the New Wave or not. There have been a few examples of "official" writers who have continued the line of the New Wave. Leonid Zhukhovitskii's Legenda o Richarde Tishkove (The Legend of Richard Tishkov) and Letaite samoletami (Go by Air), for instance, are typical 'Jeans

Prose' works about searching and restless nonconformistic young drifters, who play guitars, read Aksyonov and listen to songs by Okudzhava and Vysotsky. The most clear influence of the New Wave, however, is found in the unofficial literature. As we have discussed earlier, the Leningrad writers and poets around the Blue Lagoon Anthology were clearly influenced by both the New Wave and the Beat Generation, although they now reject both as having sold out to the establishment. The most prominent member of this group, the writer and poet Edvard Limonov, has, as a matter of fact, produced a novel -- It's Me, Edichka -- about a young Russian writer, exiled to New York, which seems like a complete imitation of the stereotypical Beat novel, containing all the "typical" Beat elements: a young poet living among prostitutes, homosexuals, addicts, and miserable Bohemians in New York, but nevertheless convinced of the importance of himself and his own feelings; the confessional style; the hostility towards the establishment in both the Soviet Union and the United States, etc. But the Blue Lagoon people, and Limonov and other exiled Leningrad writers, like for instance Vladimir Maramzin, who also seems to continue the search of the New Wave, have not, as Bitov points out, had any influence on the all-Russian literary process so far.

By and large, what we have suggested in this dissertation is that the New Wave must be seen as one literary movement, including both poets and writers, and that this movement to a significant degree resembled the Beat Generation. As a matter of fact, the Beat Generation and the New Wave seem to belong to an international movement in literature which had ramifications in other European countries, like Poland and Czechoslovakia, Scandinavia and England (the 'Angry Young Men'). And it is our belief and hope that such an approach will lead to a "re-evaluation" and further discussion of Russian literature of the 60s.

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